# "EM"

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"EM."

# "EM."

A Novel.

BY

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NEW YORK:
*G. W. Dillingham Co., Publishers,*
MDCCCXCVIII.

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# "E M."

## CHAPTER I.

### A HORROR IN HIGH LIFE.

She looked, how pallid there!
Not starting, sighing, weeping now,
The quiet anguish of her brow
Was written by despair.—MICHELL.

UPON a certain memorable day, on the opening of the summer term of 18—, the criminal court-room was crowded nearly to suffocation.

Every seat was filled, every foot of standing ground occupied, while, from the wide-open double-doors, could have been seen a sea of heads, pressing up from the stairway and lobby and choking the entrance.

In this sultry July weather, although every window was thrown open, the atmosphere of the place, charged with the breath of many hundreds of men and women, was heavy to faintness. Yet not even for a breath of

fresh air would any one leave the court-room. All persistently kept their seats or stood their ground.

The case about to be commenced was one of unparalleled interest.

A crime had been committed in the centre of a great city that had thrilled with horror and amazement the whole circumference of the country.

For weeks past the case had absorbed public attention and furnished the most sensational items for the press.

This general and profound interest was excited not only by the character of the crime, atrocious as it was in itself, but also by that of the supposed criminal. Emolyn Wyndeworth, a young and lovely girl, the only child and heiress of one of the most aristocratic and wealthy families in the country, and hitherto a maiden of the fairest fame.

Only a few months before she had been the darling of a delightful home, the idol of a large social circle; now she stood at the bar of justice, arraigned on the awful charge of murder.

The history of this *cause célebré* is as follows:

Emolyn Wyndeworth was the only child and sole heiress of General Archibald Wyndeworth, of Wynde Slopes, Maryland.

By the early death of both her parents she had been left an orphan at the tender age of seven years.

Naturally she fell under the guardianship of her sole surviving male relative, who happened to be her father's uncle, the aged Captain Oliver Wyndeworth, late of the United States Navy.

The captain had long retired from active service, and lived at ease in a fine old-fashioned suburban mansion surrounded by extensive grounds, shaded by old forest trees, and overlooking the river at Green Point, the southern extremity of the city.

During the lifetime of his accomplished wife, and the girlhood of his dashing daughter, Malvina, the old mansion at Green Point had been the seat of an elegant and affluent hospitality, the resort of beauty, fashion and celebrity.

Of late years, however, since the decease of this wife and the marriage of this daughter, the lonely widower's home had come to be the rendezvous of certain "choice spirits" from among the higher officers of the army and navy, and the more eminent statesmen of the senate and the house.

In one word, sumptuous Green Point had become transformed into a sort of an aristocratic "Headlong Hall."

Captain Wyndeworth had been living this free-and-easy bachelor life about five years, when he suddenly found himself encumbered with the care of his little orphan grand-niece, Emolyn.

The news came to him in this way.

It was on a clear, bright morning early in July, and Captain Wyndeworth was seated at the head of his batchelor breakfast-table, surrounded by some half a dozen "jolly dogs," who had been spending the summer holidays with him, and who found themselves too comfortable and happy to shorten their visit—when the mail-bag was brought in.

The host took it, unlocked it, and emptied its contents upon the table.

They consisted of several newspapers and one letter.

He passed the newspapers around among his guests, and then asked leave to read the letter, which was for himself.

He had no sooner done so, however, than he sank back in his chair, and, with his gray hair on end, exclaimed:

"HERE'S A GO!"

"What's up?" inquired Senator Erskine, an eminent politician, who was very réchêrché in his language on the floor of the legislative hall, or in the drawing-rooms of society, but who was by no means choice in the selection of his words at the bachelor breakfast-table of the old retired naval officer.

"What the d—l is up?" he repeated, seeing that his host still stared at the open letter in his hand.

"A very deuce of a dilemma!" exclaimed the captain, running his fingers through the porcupine quills represented by the iron-gray hair that stood upright on his forehead—"A very d—l of a dilemma!"

"Ay! I see that, in general, but what is it in particular?" inquired Mr. Erskine.

"Listen!" exclaimed Captain Wyndeworth, and while his guests left their newspapers unopened, and gave him their utmost attention, he read aloud his letter, which proved to be from a Maryland lawyer, announcing the death of his nephew's widow and the legacy she had left him, in the shape of the guardianship of the infant heiress, Emolyn.

"And not a lady in the house to look after the little lass!" groaned the unwilling guardian, with a gesture of desperation and a look of dismay, that was fully reflected in the faces of all his boon companions.

But no one spoke.

"Now, what is to be done? Why the deuce don't you suggest something?" impatiently demanded the captain of his perplexed council.

"Decline the trust," said Senator Erskine.

"Yes, of course, do *that!*" added his relieved comrades-in-cards.

"Can't do '*that*,' gentlemen! What? Refuse to receive my poor, dead and gone nephew's orphan child.

Not likely! To be sure, I have not seen the lad for a score of years, or so, but I feel that he was my elder brother's only son, ay! and a gallant officer, too, or he never could have risen to the rank of a brigadier-general before the age of forty years, as he did so!" added the captain, warmly.

"Let us see! He was your elder brother's only son, and therefore the heir of the old ancestral estate of Wynde Slopes! And this babe is his sole child and heiress! Why, see here, if the child had died as well as her parents, you, and your daughter Malvina after you, would have come in for that fine property, would you not?" Suggested General Byng, another brother-in-cards and boon companion of the old sailor.

"Yes, I suppose so; but I never gave it a thought. Poor Archy! I am sorry for his orphan child."

"Let us see: He was killed in a skirmish with the Utes, or the Cheyennes, which was it?" inquired the senator.

"With neither! He was not killed at all! No, sir! He, who had always been victorious over Indians and Spaniards, and all other savages and enemies, fell a victim to Yellow Jack, at last! Yes, sir, he died, if you will remember, about five years ago, while his brigade was at New Orleans, during the deadly fever season. After his death his widow, with their only child, returned to Wynde Slopes, where they have lived in the strictest retirement ever since. But now the widow, who has suffered from heart-disease ever since her husband's death, has suddenly followed him to the other world—as you have heard from the lawyer's letter. The child will be brought to me, and I cannot repulse her," emphatically concluded Captain Wyndeworth.

"It will be a deuce of a bother!" observed General Byng.

"Without doubt! But I must take her all the same, though what I shall do with her heaven only knows," groaned the newly-made guardian.

"Board her out with some female relative or friend," suggested Commander Bruce, another whist-playing cronie of his host.

"The child has not one in the world except my daughter Mal., who is with her husband in his quarters at Plattsburg—no place to bring up a girl. Besides Mal. never would be bothered with her! Having put her own little girl away at boarding-school, it is not likely that she will trouble herself with other people's children."

"So then Mrs. Warde is with the major at Plattsburg?" observed Senator Erskine, reflectively.

"Oh, yes. Of course she is! Mal. trots around after Warde wherever he goes, and leaves her only child, a little girl, at boarding-school, as I said."

"Then, by the way, why not place this little charge of yours at boarding-school with her cousin?" suggested Commander Bruce.

"What! Send a seven-year old babe to school? How do I know what sort of treatment the helpless little one might receive from teachers and schoolmates? No, gentlemen, I must keep the child home, *home here*, where she will be sure of kindness if she is sure of nothing else."

This ended the controversy.

The breakfast party soon arose from the table, and in the course of a few days the summer guests took leave of Green Point.

A week after the departure of the company, in the midst of a midsummer thunder-storm, little Emolyn Wyndeworth arrived, in charge of a lawyer's clerk and a colored nurse.

The clerk left as soon as he had delivered the infant heiress and certain documents into the hands of the guardian and trustee.

The nurse, of course, remained in attendance upon her little mistress.

Emolyn Wyndeworth, at the age of seven, was a fair, fragile-looking little creature, with a small, softly-moulded form, slender yet well-rounded limbs, taper wrists and ankles, and tiny hands and feet, a graceful neck, and an elegant little head, covered with a profusion of pale auburn hair that shone like a halo around a lovely little face of delicately chiselled features and clear rosy complexion, lighted up by a pair of radiant blue eyes, full of life and love, mischief and merriment.

One would read her, at a glance, for a most affectionate and confiding child, who would be sure to win the hearts of all around her ; but, also, for a most willful and erratic little spirit, who would be equally sure to give a great deal of trouble to her teachers and attendants.

When she was taken before her uncle, while still in her quaint little travelling suit of dark blue gingham, with a straw hat and blue vail, he received her very tenderly, took her up in his arms, kissed her, said he was very glad to see her, and that he hoped she would like to stay with him and be his little girl.

The child returned his kiss and said she would.

But having an exquisite little supper on hand for that night, the old captain soon turned his little ward over to his colored housekeeper, Aunt Monica, with only one simple direction as to her treatment :

"Make her as happy and comfortable as ever you can, and NEVER LET ME HEAR HER CRY."

Aunt Monica, gravely shaking her wise old head,

took the child away to change her travelling suit for a house dress.

A handsome, spacious chamber on the third floor front had been assigned to the little girl, so that she might be at the same time well lodged and entirely out of the way of her uncle.

To this room Aunt Monica led little Emolyn, and here they found the pretty mulatto nurse, Melpomene, whose tragic name the child had funnily abbreviated to "Pony."

The girl was standing over the large open trunk that contained the orphan's whole wardrobe, including not only her new mourning outfit, but also a large stock of colored dresses.

Melpomene had selected a neat black bombazine dress and laid it out.

Then it was that the young lady's self-will was made very manifest.

"Pony, if you please, I will not wear that black dress," she said, with a precise little politeness peculiar to herself.

"But, honey, you *got* to wear black for your dead mother," said Melpomene.

"My mamma is *not* dead, Pony! Nobody ever *dies*. They go out of their bodies. That is all. Mamma told me so. She is gone home to papa. And when the Lord calls me, my mamma and papa will come and take me home too. You ought to know that, you dear old Pony, for you have heard the Bible read often enough," said the child, with a quaint gravity.

"Lord bless us and save us, who put such things as that in the young one's head?" exclaimed Monica in wonder.

"Her father and her mother did; and out of the Word

of the Lord, too. I do suppose it is all true, only one can't always be thinking of it."

"Well, there! You better dress the child, and not waste your time 'xpounding feeology!" said Aunt Monica.

"Come, honey, put on your pretty black dress for poor Pony," pleaded the nurse, coaxingly.

"Oh, Pony, I cannot. I do not like black. Besides, I promised dear, sweet mamma not to wear black and not to weep. So I will not wear black, and I will not weep, if—if—if—I can help—help—help it! But you should not tell me that she is de—de—dead!" cried the child, losing all her self-command and bursting into irrepressible sobs and tears.

"There! there! there! Let me shut the door, for goodness gracious sake! We musn't let the old marster hear her cry! The first and last word he said to me about the child was to make her happy and comfortable, and not to let him hear her cry!" exclaimed Monica, in comic consternation, as she hurriedly closed the door.

Meanwhile Melpomene was trying to console the weeping child with tender caresses and earnest assurances that her mother was in heaven.

"I know—know she is, but I can—cannot help crying. I will stop—stop as soon as I can," sobbed Emolyn, on seeing how her emotion distressed her attendants.

"The—there! I have done now," she sighed, wiping her eyes. "I have done now only, please, *never* say that mamma is *dead*. It is so *awful* for any one to say that!"

"I'll bite the end of my tongue off sooner!" exclaimed Melpomene.

"Now, Pony, give me my sky-blue organdie dress,

with the white lace trimming. I will wear that," concluded the orphan, decisively.

"But, HONEY!" cried Melpomene.

"Give it to her, for goodness sake! I tell you, old marster say we must make her happy, and *never* let him hear her cry! Better mind what old marster say! Tell *you*, if he turn and look at you once, with his great, big, blue eyes, you'll think you're shot dead! Give the child her own way. Don't let him hear her cry," implored Monica.

Melpomene complied, though with deep sighs.

As soon as the little fairy princess was dressed to her satisfaction, she put her arms around her nurse's neck and kissed her, cooing like a little dove.

"I *do* love you, dear, pretty Pony! I *do* love you so much; only, please, *never* again try to make me do what I don't like! *It kills me!*"

Melpomene warmly returned her caresses, and promised all she wished.

A few minutes later the little girl went down stairs alone and found her way to her uncle's study, and stood before him a vision of infantile beauty, with her perfect little form, clear, rosy complexion, auburn hair, and azure eyes, set off well by her bright blue dress with the white lace trimming, and the blue and white ribbons that tied up her tresses.

"The very image of her father in his childhood, only more lovely and dainty. Come here, you little fairy, and let me kiss you," said the captain, as he held out his hands to welcome her.

She ran into his arms and kissed him.

He lifted her to his knee, and inquired:

"Now, who sent you down here to bother me?"

"Nobody sent me, uncle. I came of my own free will!"

"Really! Well, why are you not wearing black, for your mother?"

"Because mamma wished me not to do so."

"Oh, a very sufficient reason."

"Yes, but not to deceive you, uncle, there was another reason," added the child, sagely shaking her auburn tresses and raising her blue eyes to his face.

"Indeed! Well, what was it?" inquired the amused old man.

"Because I do not like to wear black."

"Really, now? And do you never do what you do not like?" inquired the captain, looking wistfully into his little ward's face.

"Oh, yes, very often, when I think it is for the best, and when I do it of my *own free will!* And *then* I often come to like what at first I did not. But, oh! it *kills* me for any one to try to make me do what I don't like! *I* never want to make *any* body do what *they* don't like. 'And I say it *kills* me for any one to try to make *me*,'" added Emolyn, inspired by the memory of Melpomene's effort to rule over her.

The old sailor looked down on the earnest little face, murmuring:

"Ah! a true Wyndeworth! It is liberty or death with you, as with all your race! The love of liberty is not only a principle, but a passion with them. It is a pity you were born a girl, my child: for with you the love of liberty will be the hare's not the lion's. You will *run* for freedom, not fight for it."

"I do not know. I cannot tell until I am tried," answered Emolyn sagely.

"My venerable friend," said the captain, gravely regarding her, "how old might you be?"

"I am seven years old, sir."

"Oh! I thought by the wisdom of your remarks you

might be seventy. Now, then, run away and amuse yourself like a little girl of seven. 'My house, my servants, and myself are yours,' as the polite Spaniards say! Run away! I am going to have a lot of fellows here to supper to-night, and I must study the concoction of a new salad! I will beat Bruce at salads, if I die for it! But such low ambitions are beneath the dignity of your years and wisdom. When I need the sage counsels of age, I will send for you. Go."

Emolyn, feeling vaguely that she was good-humoredly ridiculed, smiled and kissed her uncle and ran out.

The lonely child roamed all over the house, up and down stairs, and into every room and closet, until, at last, quite tired out, she lay down on the attic floor and fell fast asleep, and slept until she was found there by the half-distracted nurse, who had sought her "sorrowing" all the afternoon, and who, now rejoicing, carried her to the spacious third-floor front chamber, and undressed and put her to bed, without waking her.

"But she hasn't had her supper," objected Monica, when she found what had been done.

"Never wake up a child to feed it. That is too gross," replied Melpomene.

Such was the reception of little Emolyn Wyndeworth and such was her first day at Green Point.

But the next morning Emolyn was up with the sun, and down in the dining-room in time to take her breakfast with her uncle.

And so, day by day, she won her way into the old man's affections, until at length her presence became very necessary to his comfort and happiness.

Having no children or grandchildren around him, the kind old captain petted and spoiled his little ward, as if he had been her grandmother instead of her great-uncle.

The household took their cue from their master, so that it soon became a contest among the domestics, who should humor the little mistress the most.

Even the visitors of the house vied with each other, in little attentions to the child.

So the little Emolyn Wyndeworth became the darling of her home and the idol of its social circle.

On her eighth birthday, her uncle made her a weekly allowance of five dollars for pocket-money, which he punctually paid every Saturday morning.

"Just to do as she pleases with! Just to throw away on toys and sweetmeats, or in any way she chooses! It is good for *trade* any way, and life is not so long for any of us, that I should deny her this independence in her childhood," said the old captain to himself in excuse for his indiscretion.

Emolyn was wild with delight at being put in possession of this revenue.

"Now, Pony!" she exclaimed to her nurse and confidant, "I have got money to spend as I like! And now I can *suckle the poor*. Mamma always told me when I should have money of my own to spend I must suckle the poor," she added, making a little mistake in the use of words, such as young children are apt to make, but doing it so softly and sweetly as to suggest a nursing mother's tender love in these ministrations to the needy.

And from that day forth she did succor the poor, and found her deepest delight in doing it.

One young playmate the lonely child had, and only one. This was Leonidas Bruce, the son of the commander. A very pure, close affection bound the hearts of these children together.

"Lonny" Bruce, the companion of all her amusements, was also her escort in all her walks down into

the narrow streets and alleys, where she found the suffering little children of the Lord, whom she delighted to relieve.

"Why don't you buy some rock almond candy sometimes? It's awful nice!" said Lonny Bruce one day, as he walked by her side, carrying a market basket filled with provisons for her poor.

"I'll buy some for you if you want it," replied the little girl; "but as for me, when I eat candy, it is gone and gives me no more pleasure. But when I take a shin of beef and some vegetables to poor Stark's family on Saturday night, oh, bless you! I think all day Sunday how they are enjoying cooking and eating their soup, and it makes me so happy! And so in other cases. Now, last Saturday I *did* want to buy a black-eyed doll. I do *dote* on black-eyed dolls; but it would have cost five dollars, which was all I had, and I wanted to get a warm shawl for poor old Mrs. Smith. And oh! next day, when I saw her at church looking so comfortable and respectable in her large woolen shawl, I could not think of the black-eyed doll for feeling all the time how warm and pleased she was. Now, who would not rather have felt *that* than owned the doll? Oh, I tell you I get a great deal of pleasure out of my five dollars a week."

So the loving, self-willed, generous, erratic child grew from month to month, and from year to year, untaught and untrained. In the garden of her soul the weeds and flowers grew and flourished together.

Only, as time passed, there was one friend who did take the responsibility of expostulating with Captain Wyndeworth on the subject of his ward's education.

This was Mrs. Commander Bruce.

She put it strongly to the guardian that Miss Wyndeworth, the daughter of General Archibald Wyndeworth,

should not be allowed to grow up in total ignorance of all that a young lady should be taught; but she should be sent to a first-class boarding-school or be provided with competent teachers at home.

Now, the presence of Emolyn had become too vital a necessity to the happiness of the old captain to permit him to think of parting with her; but he compromised the matter by engaging an accomplished Scotch lady, a Miss McCormick, as resident governess, and three learned professors—namely, of music, painting, and languages—to attend and give lessons on certain days.

But both governess and professors were notified by Captain Wyndeworth that they were not expected to restrain or to coerce Miss Wyndeworth in any particular.

So Emolyn kept her school hours, or gave herself a holiday—met her appointments with her masters, or sent them away with an excuse, as she pleased.

And if ever Lonny Bruce happened to have had a holiday given *him*, or to have played truant on his own account, and come to invite her to go with him to see a ship launched at the Navy Yard, or a dress-parade at the barracks, or to hear the band play in the park, then governess or professor was instantly sent to the right about, and the gentle little outlaw was off with her companion on a frolic.

Her education was so desultory, that had she not been blessed with a quick perception, strong understanding and retentive memory, she must have grown up an utter ignoramus, while her will was so uncontrolled that had she not been gifted with a sweet temper and a sensitive conscience, she must have developed into a passionate and unscrupulous little despot.

As it happened, she was as amiable and intelligent as she was beautiful and attractive; so that her willfulness

harmed no one except, perhaps, herself. She was the sunshine of her uncle's house, happy in herself, and making the happiness of all around her.

As she grew from childhood toward girlhood, her uncle gradually increased her allowance, and when she was but fourteen years old, he entrusted her with an income of twelve hundred dollars a year for her own personal expenses.

"The child loves to have her own way. She shall have it in spending some of her own money at least. She might as well learn to buy her own clothes now as any other time, especially as she has no mother to do it for her," said her old uncle to himself, in extenuation of conduct that many might have called injudicious at least.

This new allowance delighted Emolyn, because it gave her ampler means to "succor" her poor. She did not profess to "suckle" them now. Since the advent of her accomplished governess she had mended her phraseology.

## CHAPTER II.

### A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.

Ah me! Despite a governed breast,
Seeming the while at perfect rest,
What anguish soul may bear! —MICHEL.

Emolyn Wyndeworth lived this free, active and joyous life until she reached her seventeenth year, when she assumed her place as the mistress of her uncle's house, sat at the head of his table and entertained his guests.

She was the angel of his domestic life and the queen of his social circle.

But before the close of this year sorrows came upon her "in battalions."

First, her uncle's only daughter, Mrs. Malvina Warde, lost her husband, who was killed in a sudden attack of the Cheyenne Indians upon Fort Awe, where his regiment was then stationed, and where both were living at the time of his death.

Having nothing to live on but his pension as a major's widow, Mrs. Warde, after an absence of fifteen years, returned to her father's house.

Malvina Warde was, at this time, about thirty-eight years of age—a tall, dark-eyed, dark-haired, handsome woman; but a born and bred tyrant, whose natural despotism had, by her military life, been hardened into inflexibility.

The very first step taken by Mrs. Warde on re-entering her father's house was to mount her long vacated throne at the head of the domestic kingdom, to the total overthrow of the little queen who had so long reigned there supreme.

Her next step was to assert a degree of authority over Emolyn Wyndeworth that the gentle little outlaw could by no means endure.

Emolyn was a singular compound of willfulness and toleration which seemed incongruous, but which was not really so; for her nature was perfectly harmonious, and her conduct consistent. To a passionate love for her *own* moral free agency, she united a deep religious reverence for that of all other creatures; so that while she could not bear to have her own freedom profaned, she would have shrank from invading that of another.

This young girl would never have been happy under

any other circumstance than in the perfect liberty she had enjoyed in her uncle's house up the time of her cousin's return.

Now, indeed, all her happiness departed. Mrs. Warde was determined to conquer her, and to reduce her to military discipline in the observance of set rules and set hours for rising and retiring; for eating and drinking; for work and recreation; for going out and coming in.

But Emolyn quietly refused to be governed by "martial law," and tacitly set Mrs. Warde and her rules at naught.

Then ensued a long and bitter struggle between the woman and the girl. Mrs. Warde strove for conquest; Emolyn for liberty.

It would take too long to tell of all the acts of petty insolence by which the widow made the girl's "life a burden" to her.

The strife continued unremittingly, with ever increasing malice on the part of Malvina Warde, and of suffering on that of Emolyn Wyndeworth, until at length Captain Wyndeworth interfered.

"Let the girl alone," he said. "She has always had her own way, let her have it still."

"She will go to her destruction!" exclaimed Mrs. Warde, viciously.

"No, she won't, unless you drive her to it, which you may do if you keep on nagging her at this rate. She is a true Wyndeworth, and has been like a daughter to me all these years that you have been away. I always let her do as she pleased, and I must say that she has always pleased to do right. Let her alone, I say. Don't tyrannize over her. I won't have it."

This little contest took place at the dinner-table, to which Emolyn had come in from one of her walks

among the poor whom she succored. She sat down without changing her dress; for which breach of discipline Mrs. Warde had ordered her to leave the room, when Captain Wyndeworth came to her rescue, as related.

Mrs. Warde knew exactly how far she could venture to go in opposition of her father's will, and so she desisted from her despotism at the moment, and felt obliged to modify her treatment of Emolyn by descending from torturing the girl to the milder persecution of annoying her.

But she never forgave her father for the words he had spoken, or Emolyn for the rebuke she had heard.

She had many selfish reasons for hating the orphan; the first was, that Emolyn Wyndeworth stood between her and the inheritance of the great Wynde Slopes estate, which she coverted for herself beyond all measure. The second was, that Emolyn had supplanted her in her father's affection. The third was, that she had evidently won the heart of Leonidas Bruce, whom Mrs. Warde had mentally set apart as the husband of her own daughter, soon to be brought from boarding-school. The last and most exasperating was, that she had been rebuked by her father upon Emolyn's account, and in Emolyn's presence.

She had been the girl's tyrant; she was now her bitter, uncompromising, unscrupulous enemy, whose malice was only restrained by the presence of that girl's protector.

But ah! the hour was at hand when the authority of the old captain could no longer shield his niece.

One night the kind-hearted old man had a paralytic stroke that stretched him on his bed a helpless and speechless invalid.

And though after a few weeks he recovered the use

of his speech, he never quite regained the faculties of his mind.

Emolyn was wild with grief. No suffering that Malvina Warde had ever inflicted on her was to be compared to the anguish of her soul on beholding the condition of her beloved uncle.

"I could have borne his death," she said to her confidant, Lonny Bruce. "I could have borne his death, because I know that 'death is an orderly step in life'; but this! Oh, Lonny! Lonny!"

"It can't last long, Lynny. He will soon be released and go to heaven. Father says so," answered the youth.

"Oh, but the doctor says he may live in this wretched state for years and years! And, oh! Lonny! my cruel cousin will not even let me help to nurse him—no, nor even see his dear old face. She leads me such a life, Lonny! She tries to make a slave of me! Of me, a free-born spirit."

"I wish she was a man. I'd thrash him! But why don't you fight her? It is all very well to talk about behaving like a young lady, but when things come to this pass, you know, why don't you fight her?"

"Oh! I cannot fight, Lonny. But I would run away if it were not for uncle, though he would not know me, for he does not know anybody, Pony tells me. Yes, I would run away, if it were not for uncle and for *you*, Lonny. For I know if I were to run away, she would make you marry Belinda, her daughter."

"Make me—make me—marry Belinda! Why, I don't know the girl! And what's more, I don't *want* to know her if she is like her mother!" exclaimed the youth, his dark eyes dilated with angry surprise.

"She twits me with *this*—that I am making a fool of myself by associating with you, for that your father and

herself long ago agreed that you were to marry her daughter!" added Emolyn.

"I never heard of such a piece of insolence in all my life! What right has she and the governor to marry me and Belinda, I should like to know?" indignantly demanded the youth.

"Then you never will do it, Lonny?" murmured Emolyn.

"Who, I?—I marry any other young lady than— Not likely! Not even possible! I don't know that I ever before told you in so many set words that I hope to marry *you*, Lynny, when the proper time shall come. But surely you must have known it all along, just as well as I did," said the lad, earnestly and anxiously.

"Yes, I did know it all along, Lonny. But Mrs. Warde is an awful woman. I did not know what she might bring you to do!"

"She will never bring me to be false to you, Lynny! Do not think it of me."

"Well, then, since you are safe, I think if she tries to enslave me any more than she has, I must run away," sighed Emolyn.

"Oh! don't dream of it, Lyn! Be patient, dear Lyn, until I come back."

"'Come back.' Oh, Lonny! are you going away?" exclaimed Emolyn, turning pale.

"Yes, Lynny, I came over this morning to tell you. My father has procured a midshipman's warrant for me, and I am to sail on the *Eagle* for the Mediterranean on the first of next month."

A cry of despair broke from the lips of Emolyn.

"Oh, Lonny! Lonny! Lonny! my heart will break when you are gone! I shall not have a friend left to save my life!" she cried.

"Oh! don't talk so, dear Lyn!" pleaded the boy.

"Oh, I cannot bear it, Lonny! I shall die!" cried Emolyn, bursting into a wild storm of tears and sobs.

"Oh, don't! don't cry, Lynny! I am not gone yet, and something might happen to prevent my going; so don't cry until I am gone, Lynny!" coaxed the lad.

"Yes, but when you are gone, I shall have no one to comfort me when I cry! And, besides, who knows but out in foreign countries you may mee—meet some beautiful young lady, whom you will li—li—like better than me, so I shall never se—se—see you again," said the girl, amidst tempestuous sobs and tears that rendered her words nearly unintelligible.

"Come out for a walk, dear Lynny. I want to tell you something, without the chance of that wicked, old hyena overhearing us. I want to make you as safe and happy as I can before I go away—if I must go," said the lad, innocently drawing out his own pocket-handkerchief and wiping away her tears.

Emolyn, whose storm of grief had somewhat subsided, followed him to the front passage, where she took her straw hat from the rack, drew her gloves from her pocket, and put them all on—and having thus simply and quickly prepared for her walk, she went out with her boy-companion.

It was a lovely morning in June. A clear blue sky canopied the green and blooming earth, and the broad, flowing river. Sunshine and bird-music filled all the air.

"Lynny," said the boy, when they had left the house behind them, "let's go down on the shore and walk around the Point, and then go up and see the old ruined chapel and Priest Ned."

"Anywhere, so it isn't in a public street; for I know I shall cry again soon," said the girl.

"No, you won't. I am going to make you laugh! I am going to make you sure of me, and myself sure of

you ; and that will fortify our minds against despair in our separation, and give you a great deal of strength and confidence to withstand old Madam Hyena. So let us go to Priest Ned."

With quick intuition, Emolyn perfectly understood Leonidas ; but surprise and a very natural diffidence prevented her making any reply. Nor, indeed, did she know what to say, or whether this new plan of Lonny's would make her more or less happy or miserable.

"You don't answer, me, Lynny," said the youth, as they walked along.

"Tell me one thing. Will it make *you* happy, if I consent to your plan, Lonny?" she inquired, in a low voice.

"It will make me as happy as a humming-bird and as proud as a peacock," exclaimed the boy, enthusiastically.

"Then I consent. And—yes, I know it will make me happier, too," said Emolyn.

So the willful young pair walked dreamily along on the soft sands, with the broad, flowing river on their right hand, and the green flowery banks on their left, where the perfume of the sweetbrier filled the air.

Soon they came in sight of the deserted chapel and the priest's house—the lonely chapel being little better than a ruin, while the priest's house was a mere hut, and the priest himself a hermit.

A word about this picturesque and romantic ruin as I remember it in my childhood.

The chapel was situated on the high bank that was thickly grown with wild roses, sweetbriers, blackberry bushes, and other vegetation in an inextricable thicket. It was built of small, red, diamond shaped bricks, imported in early colonial days from the "old country." It was very small, having been only the private chapel

attached to the manor-house of an ancient Catholic family named Barriere—since extinct. The old manor-house was destroyed by fire soon after the death of the last Barriere, who, in dying, had bequeathed a tiny gem of a cottage and a trifling annuity to his private chaplain, on condition that the legatee should take care of the little chapel, beneath whose chancel stones lay the bodies of the last de Barrieres.

The remainder of the property went to a distant relation of another name.

"Priest Ned," as he was called by his irreverent neighbors—Father Edward Dubourge, as he had been known in his more prosperous days—had attained the age of seventy before he lost his patron and gained his inheritance. More than thirty years had passed since then, and the aged hermit was over a century old.

The banker and trustee with whom the funds for his annuity had been placed had long ago failed, and the old pensioner's annuity was lost in the general financial wreck.

So, lacking the means of keeping the little monumental chapel and his own little cottage in good order, the old man had suffered them both to go to decay.

He himself might easily have found refuge for his age in some Catholic monastery or brotherhood, but he prayed to be left alone in his hut, where he had grown like an oyster in its shell, so closely that it would have been death to have "shucked" him. And there "Priest Ned" remained, living quite alone and faithfully guarding the graves of his beloved patrons, the de Barrieres, under the decaying walls of the monumental chapel.

He was supported by outside charity, and from the time that Emolyn, an eight-year-old child, had first received her little allowance and began to "succor the poor," he had been one of her most beloved protégés.

The old centenarian was now unquestionably in his dotage, and quite irresponsible for his acts.

This, the cunning, madcap young "middy" knew full well, or he never would have selected Priest Ned for the service he meant to require.

The young pair went to the door of the little hut that had once been a gem of a little cottage, but was now, like the chapel, half in ruin, and they waited while Leonidas knocked for admission.

A quavering voice bade them come in, and they entered.

A tall, gaunt old man, clothed in a long, black gown, with a long, pale face, dimly lighted up by a pair of deeply-sunken black eyes, and a bald head covered with a black skull-cap, stood before them. Such was Priest Ned.

"*Benedictie*, my children; what do you please to want?" inquired the hermit of the chapel.

"To be married," blurted forth the boy, while the girl dropped down on a ricketty chair and fixed her eyes on the mouldering floor.

"'To be married!'" echoed the priest, with the dazed look of dotage.

"Yes!" persisted Lonny.

And so saying he took the old man by the front of his black gown and began to tell him why he and his betrothed wished to be married immediately.

The longer Lonny talked the more perplexed the priest became; but he comprehended that they wished to be united in holy matrimony, and so when Emolyn, fearing to lose her husband, came and joined her entreaties to Lonny's arguments, the weak old man yielded; and then and there, without even remembering to ask them the usual preliminary questions, he married these

foolish children, who were destined yet to weep tears of blood for their folly!

Lonny paid the priest a good fee and bound him over to secrecy.

Then the newly-married pair left the hut and began to retrace their steps along the sands towards Green Point—both half-pleased, half-frightened, Lonny rejoicing in his newly-acquired dignity as a married man, but wondering how he should ever face the "governor" with the confession; Lynny gazing on her wedding-ring, and smiling to herself upon being a bride.

"Mrs. Leonidas Bruce!" said the boy, mischievously.

"Oh! hush Lonny!" she whispered.

"I won't!—Mrs. Lieutenant Bruce!"

"Don't Lonny! Don't!"

"I will!—Mrs. Captain Bruce! Mrs. Commodore Bruce! And if I could promote you any higher in the navy than that, I would. Now shall I take you right down into the Yard and up to the governor's presence and introduce you as my wife and his daughter-in-law, and ask his protection of you from the hyena?"

"Oh, no, no, no, Lonny, I should die! Don't think of it! You frighten me! Wait until you return from your voyage, Lonny—that will be time enough to confess to the old folks, and then you would have three years to stay on land with me."

"Yes, but I want to stay with you these precious three weeks that I have before sailing! Come now! let me take you to my father! He'll row me, awfully, I know, but he can't undo what's done; so after he gets through with blowing me up, he will remember that I am his only son, and that you are an A 1 match for anybody's son; and so he will forgive us, and take you home, and protect you against that old hyena while I am gone. Come, Lynny!"

"Oh, not for the world, Lonny! If I had known you wanted me to do that, I wouldn't have married you at all!" replied Emolyn, pale and trembling.

"Why, that is just what I wanted to marry you for, Lynny; to take you to my father, and give you a lawful refuge from Mrs. Warde's tyranny. Do come Lynny! and then I shall go away to sea contented," pleaded the midshipman.

But Emolyn grew so terrified at the bare idea of facing Commander Bruce as the bride of his son by a runaway marriage, that she seemed on the very verge of swooning.

Leonidas, frightened in his turn, was obliged to desist from his pleadings, while he seated her on a rock beside the river to let her recover herself.

"Well, there, Lynny, I will say no more," he pouted with boyish petulance. "In hurrying our marriage, I had three good objects to accomplish; to make sure of you; to spend three happy weeks with you in my father's house; and then, when going to sea, to leave you safe and satisfied under my mother's protection. But you will not consent, and I cannot help it."

"Lonny, I am afraid to face your parents," replied the weeping girl; "but I will be with you as much as ever I can, during these last three weeks; and—knowing that we are united in a bond that nothing but death can break,—I shall be armed against all Mrs. Warde's oppressions, with courage and patience enough to bear my burdens, and do my duties for the next three years of separation. At the end of that time, Lonny, you will come back and claim me as your wife, and no one will dare to reproach us, for you will be twenty-one and of age then; and I will be eighteen, and, by the terms of my father's will, I shall than be mistress of myself and my fortune. Perhaps, then, Lonny, you

may leave the navy, and consent to pass your life with me, at Wynde Slopes, where you will find enough to do, —I tell you!—in looking after our estate. Surely, Lonny, these thoughts, that give me courage to bear the next three years of separation, should fortify you also against the grief of absence?"

"Lynny, no! nothing will console me; but you must have your own way, I suppose, so it is of no use talking. But, will you stay with me as much as you can while I remain here?"

"Indeed I will, Lonny, for are we not married? And are you not all that I have in the world to love me, now that my dear uncle—"

Her answer ended in a burst of tears.

The boy wiped them away and kissed her.

"We must go home now. It is near dinner-time, and Mrs. Warde will be furious if I am not there in time. Oh, how I wish I was free!" exclaimed Emolyn, rising.

"How I wish you would let me make you free!" cried Lonny, as he walked by her side.

They reached Green Point in good time.

Mrs. Warde had not even suspected the absence of Emolyn. She was too much taken up by the condition of her helpless father, at whose bedside she passed nearly all her time. It was said by those who knew Malvina Warde, that this devotion did not proceed entirely from filial affection, but was largely adulterated by self-interest; for, in the event of the old captain's death, his income would die with him, and his daughter, beside her own small pension, would have nothing to live on. So it was her cue to give her old father the most watchful attention to restore him to health, if possible, or, at least, to keep him and his income alive as long as practicable.

Whatever her motives might have been, her course of

action was a great relief to Emolyn, who was now left in a state of freedom from surveillance, such as she had not enjoyed since the advent of her enemy.

Every morning Emolyn went out with her boy-bride-groom for a long, wandering walk down the low, sandy shore, under the shelter of the high green brier-covered banks of the river; or else across the long bridge, and into the deep woods on the opposite shore. And every evening they spent long hours together in the deserted, dimly-lighted drawing-room.

Mrs. Warde seated in her invalid father's distant bed-chamber, never seemed to suspect what was going on.

All the servants knew well that there was a courting couple in the house; but as they all hated Mrs. Warde and loved Emolyn, not one among them would have thought of betraying the orphan heiress and her little "middy."

So the secret honeymoon of this young pair passed as pleasantly as most patent honeymoons do; for they never dreamed that years of horror and anguish, years of remorse and despair, must pay the price of these three short weeks of happiness.

## CHAPTER III.

### AFTER THE STOLEN HONEYMOON

Her sole prop
Against the grief that crushed her, was to say,
Each night, ere she lay down, "I was so young,
I had no mother, and I loved him so."
And the Lord seemed indulgent, and she dared
Trust him her soul in sleep.—BROWNING.

The brief honeymoon was over and the day of parting had come.

Leonidas Bruce was detained at home all day long, by his parents making his final arrangements for his voyage and receiving their last gifts, prayers and counsels.

Emolyn spent the day in the lonely drawing-room at Green Point, much too miserable to think of employing herself in any work or study, but now pacing up and down the floor; now throwing herself upon the sofa in a violent paroxysm of sobs and tears; and now rising and gazing from the window, in the hope of seeing the approach of Leonidas.

Only once that day she left the room, and that was when she was called to dinner. There she had to encounter the sharp, black eyes of Mrs. Warde, who looked keenly upon the girl's tearful eyes and swollen lids and smiled grim, sarcastic hatred, but made no remark.

After dinner Mrs. Warde repaired to her father's sick chamber, and Emolyn returned to the deserted drawing-room to resume her woeful watch.

Day waned and it grew too dark to see anything from the window. The servant came in to light the lamps.

"Light but one, James; that will be sufficient for me," said Emolyn, in a low tone, for she could scarcely trust herself to speak, so broken was her voice.

The man obeyed and then withdrew.

When all was still again, Emolyn left the room, opened the front door and looked out.

It was a splendid starlight night in July.

Emolyn looked up and down the street—a quiet suburban road, where there were few passers even during the day, and where there were none now. The place seemed a perfect solitude.

Emolyn strained her eyes in vain. She saw no human being near. She was about to give way to another burst of disappointment and grief, when she heard the fall of footsteps, rapidly approaching. Well she knew those steps, and her heart beat wildly with mingled pain and pleasure. Her bridegroom was coming to her; but coming to bid her farewell for three years.

In another moment Leonidas sprang up the steps and caught her in his arms.

"Oh, Lonny!"

"Oh, Linny!"

"Why didn't you come sooner?"

"I couldn't. The governor kept me busy all day, and I on the rack because I couldn't fly to my darling!"

"And I, waiting and wearying and weeping all day long—thinking sometimes you would not be able to

come at all, but would go away without bidding me good-by."

"Oh, Linny, I would have died first!"

"Well, here you are at last, thank Heaven! Oh, how long can you stay with me this last evening, Lonny?"

"All the evening, dear Linny; that is, until half-past eleven. I came out with an excuse that I wanted to see and take leave of some friends. Well, not to tell a fib, I did call to see some fellows on my way here, but I didn't spend five minutes on them altogether, and begrudged them even that. But mother said she would sit up for me, because she wanted to see me again this last evening, and so she made me promise to be home by half-past eleven at latest. You know how mothers are!"

"No; I have no mother," replied Emolyn, piteously.

"Ah, my poor darling, but you shall have one in mine," lovingly replied the youth.

"Come in, Lonny. We must not linger on the porch."

"Is the she-griffin in her lair?" almost savagely inquired Leonidas.

"Yes, she is safe in uncle's room," naively replied Emolyn. "Come in."

She took his hand and led him into the drawing-room.

The hands of the little malachite clock on the mantelpiece pointed at half-past seven.

"You see I have got four precious, blessed hours to stay with you, my darling," said the youth, calling the girl's attention to the time.

But before they could seat themselves, she threw herself into his arms and burst into tears.

"Now, what is the matter, Linny? Dear Linny, is there any new trouble?" inquired Leonidas, in sympathetic distress, as he pressed her to his bosom.

"Oh, you are going in four hours! You are going! Is not that enough to break my heart, without anything else? For there is no new trouble—no other trouble!" she gasped through her heavy sobs.

"Sit down, dearest Linny, and try to compose yourself," he pleaded, placing her on the sofa and seating himself beside her.

"Oh, Lonny," she sobbed, "this parting will kill me! When you are gone I shall be alone in the world, and my poor heart will break!"

"Ah! don't say so, my darling Emolyn. I shall be back in three years!"

"Three years is a lifetime! Three years is forever! I cannot live through them! I shall be dead and forgotten before they pass away!" wildly replied Emolyn.

"Linny, dearest Linny, why do you despair so desperately? Does that horrible old griffin trouble you more than ever?"

"Oh, no! Less than ever. She hardly ever speaks to me. She treats me with silent contempt."

"How dare she!" burst forth the boy. "I have a great mind—"

"Oh, I don't regard her at all, so that she does not restrain my freedom of action; and she has ceased to do that. No. It is not the staying with Mrs. Warde, it is the parting with you that crushes me. Oh, Lonny, Lonny, what shall I do? How shall I bear life from day to day, until I am let to die!"

"Oh, my dear Linny, you quite unman me!" exclaimed the youth, in a tone of grief and dismay. "Oh, Linny, let me entreat you to follow my advice before it is too late! Let me even *now*, at this last hour, take you to my parents' house and tell them you are my wife, and ask of them their protection for you during my absence. In this last sorrowful day of sepa-

ration, they will not be inexorable; they will be merciful; they will forgive me; and they will receive you and cherish you tenderly. And I, knowing that you will be safe in a loving home, shall go away satisfied," concluded the youth.

And certainly all good sense and good feeling was on his side.

But Emolyn was not to be persuaded.

"Oh, I cannot! I dare not face the commander and Mrs. Bruce with such a confession! And after three weeks' concealment, too! I should fall dead at their feet! I feel I should! Oh! do not make me sick with terror by even talking of such a thing!" said Emolyn, turning pale and shivering.

Leonidas looked more in sorrow than in anger, and knew not what next to say.

"Besides," added Emolyn, when she had somewhat recovered, "what good would it do, to confess our marriage, now that we have to part? It would not prevent you from going away. You would have to go all the same."

"But I would leave you, as my wife, in a home of peace and safety, free from the power and persecutions of Mrs. Warde," gravely and sadly replied the boy.

"I have told you that she does not interfere with my free agency any longer, and I do not mind her scornful looks at all. And, indeed, since you must leave me, I would rather remain here in uncle's home than in any other on earth," concluded Emolyn, with a heavy sigh.

Leonidas did not easily yield the point. The youth still pleaded with all the budding wisdom and goodness of his young spirit; but the girl continued obstinate, with all the obstinacy of cowardice—to which the mere firmness of courage is a pillar of sand!

"Oh, dear Lonny!" she sobbed at last, "do not let us

waste these precious moments in disputing with each other."

"As you will, you dear, foolish, little woman," sighed Leonidas, who thereupon began to speak of their future plan of life.

"When I return at the end of three years, dear Lynny, we will go to housekeeping at your place, Wynde Slopes; and if I cannot get a long leave, I will resign," he said.

"Oh! three years is a life-time! Three years is forever, I tell you! I shall not live so long!" impatiently repeated Emolyn.

"Oh, yes, you *must*, darling! Besides, there is always a chance of my getting home sooner."

"Oh! How?" exclaimed and questioned Emolyn, as a ray of hope lighted up her face.

"Why, as sometimes happens, our ship may capture a pirate, and I may be among the officers detailed to take the prize home to one of our ports," Leonidas explained.

"Oh, indeed! Oh! I do hope your ship may meet a pirate!" fervently ejaculated Emolyn.

"Though, to be sure, there is another view of the case," added the midshipman, thoughtfully.

"Oh! what?" asked the girl.

"Why, in the fight that must ensue, should we meet the pirate, the latter might conquer, or else I might be killed or taken prisoner."

"Oh! Oh! I *pray* you may not meet a pirate!" fervently aspirated Emolyn.

"Yes, you see, life is full of chances; but let us hope for the happy chances," solemnly pronounced the young philosopher.

"How often will you write to me, dear Lonny?" inquired Emolyn, again on the verge of tears.

"I will write to you every day of my life! I will send off a packet of letters by every homeward-bound ship until we reach some port, and then I will send a packet by every mail. There never was such a faithful correspondent as I will be to you, dear Emolyn."

"There never was such a good fellow in the world as my own, true boy!"

"And I hope you will answer every one of my letters punctually, Emolyn."

"'Hope!' You *know* I will!"

"How shall I direct my letters, love? To Mrs. Leonidas Bruce?" archly inquired the boy.

"Oh! no, no, no! Do you wish to bring a hornet's nest about my ears? Oh! no, no, no, *never* call me by your name until you can return and claim me for your wife, without bringing the day of judgment upon us!"

"Little coward! It shall be as you will! It is well you are a girl, for you would be a very poor specimen f a man!"

"Reckless desperado! It is well you are a boy, for you would be a most objectionable sort of a woman!" retorted Emolyn, trying to pluck up a little spirit even from the depths of her grief.

"How then shall I direct my letters to you, dear Linny?" again inquired the midshipman.

"Oh, to Emolyn Wyndeworth, of course."

"Care of Captain Wyndeworth?"

"Oh, horror, no! Oh, Lonny, why are you always proposing to send a bombshell into the house to blow us to destruction? Don't you know that now, when poor uncle is on his sick bed, Mrs. Warde receives the mail-bag, and all the letters pass through her hands, and that she would not hesitate to open and read mine, and then to suppress or destroy them?"

"To whom, then, shall I send them?"

"Let me see. Direct them to me, in the care of Mrs Susan Palmer, No. 7 Laundress Lane. She is one of my pensioners, you know, Lonny, and lives near this. I can trust her; so I will see her, and ask her to receive my letters, and deliver them to me with her own hand."

"And will you also post yours through her?"

"Oh, *no!* for then she would know who my correspondent was, and I do not mean to let any one know that until we are ready to announce our marriage. No, I shall post my letters at night, with my own hand, so that no one may see me."

"Oh, Linny, I do wish you were not so cautious and secretive," sighed the youth.

"Ah, Lonny, I am a poor little bird with clipped wings in purgatory! Therefore I am afraid."

"My darling little bird! if you would only let me set you free by taking you to my father's house and claiming you for my mate!" pleaded the boy.

"You could not set me free, dear Lonny! You forget one thing, dear—that I am still a minor, and your wife only by a stolen marriage. To announce that marriage now would bring us into all sorts of trouble, if Mrs Warde, acting for her father, and as my next of kin, should see fit to disallow the legality of our marriage. No, we must wait until I shall be of age."

"Linny! You never thought of that before, nor did I!" said the youth, quite aghast at this view of the subject.

"No; but I have lately been reading up on it. So you see, dear boy, even if I could summon courage to face your father and mother, with the acknowledgment of our marriage, it would be dangerous on account of Mrs. Warde's enmity."

"Yes, I see, I see. We must be patient for three years, and then I should like to know what power under heaven could part us!"

"And so, Lonny, we will drop, for the present, the subject of announcing our hasty marriage."

"As you will, dear girl; and now let me take down the address of the woman in whose care your letters are to be directed," said Leonidas, as he drew a note-book and pencil from his pocket.

As the young couple talked, inexorable time passed on, bringing the hour, the moment of separation.

At midnight, James, the only man-servant about the house, ignorant that any one was in the drawing-room, came in to fasten the windows and put out the lights.

"Leave the lamp alone, James. I will attend to it," said Emolyn, from the obscurity of her seat.

"What is the hour?" anxiously inquired Leonidas, startled out of his forgetfulness.

"A quarter after twelve, sir," replied the man, astonished to find that there was company at this time of night in that dusky room.

"Good Heaven! I had no idea it was so late!" exclaimed the midshipman, starting to his feet, drawing his watch from his pocket and holding it immediately under the lamp.

"Leave the room, James. I will attend to the light," said the young girl, whose heart was sinking like lead in her bosom, and who did not wish the servant to witness the painful parting with her lover.

The man, who half understood the motive for this order, immediately obeyed.

Then Leonidas hurried back to her side, saying, in a voice thick with emotion:

"It is really almost half-past twelve, and I promised my mother to be home at half-past eleven. Father and

I leave for New York at six o'clock to-morrow morning. He is going to see me off. I must go at once. Good-by, my own dear darling!" And he held out his arms.

"Oh, Lonny! my Lonny! has the parting moment come? Has it come?" she cried, starting up and throwing herself into his arms with a wild burst of grief.

"It has come. Try to be firm, my darling," he answered, softly, as he strained her to his bosom.

She had no more words to say, or no power of saying them; grief choked her utterance; a storm of sobs, a flood of tears were her only language.

He held her to his heart, trying to soothe and comfort her with loving and tender words and caresses, until at length her paroxysm of sorrow exhausted itself, and she was calm, or seemed to be so. Then he kissed and blessed her, laid her on the sofa, and, heart-broken himself, hurried out of the room.

James, who was sitting half asleep in the hall, roused himself up to open the street door for the exit of the late visitor.

He closed and locked it after him, and then went into the drawing-room to secure that for the night.

There, to his dismay, he found his young mistress in a fainting condition on the sofa.

He ran at once to the servants' room, where he found Melpomene alone—sitting up beyond her usual time, waiting to hear her young lady's bell.

"Somefin de matter long o' your Miss Em'lyn! Better come to her right away!" said the man.

Without a word of reply, Melpomene, in much alarm, sprang up and hurried to the drawing-room, where she found her nursling extended on the sofa, pale and almost lifeless.

"Oh, my good gracious, what is the matter? Oh, my dear child, tell your own Pony!" cried the woman, dropping on her knees at the side of the sofa and raising the half unconscious form.

"Oh, Pony?" moaned Emolyn, forgetting all her prudence, "Lonny has gone! Lonny has gone, and my heart is broken! My heart is broken, Pony!" she gasped, losing her breath.

Melpomene, who saw in the young girl before her only a child, and perceived in her despair only a child's sorrow for the loss of a dear playmate, hastened to console her with assurances that Lonny Bruce would be back again before anybody expected him; and that besides, in the meantime, Emolyn's cousin, Belinda Warde, would be coming home from school for the holidays, and would be a nicer companion for a little lady this summer than a wild, harum-scarum boy like Lonny Bruce.

Emolyn, perceiving that she was misunderstood, and not caring to enlighten her attendant, made no reply, but continued to weep, sob, and gasp as Melpomene led her to her chamber and helped her to bed.

Then Emolyn turned to the woman and sighed and panted:

"Oh, Pony, dear Pony, don't go and leave me yet? Sit by me a little while. I feel so frightened!"

"Frightened, my child? Why?"

"Oh, Pony, I don't know. I feel so lonesome and miserable now that Lonny has gone, as if I hadn't a friend in the wide world! Oh, Pony, don't go and leave me yet! Stay with me a little while."

"Why, my baby, I will stay with you all night, and every night, if you want me to."

"Dear, good Pony! I love you so! You are all the

mother I have got in this world !" said the weeping girl, weeping still more at the thought.

"Try to go to sleep, Miss Emolyn, and you will feel better when you wake. What a heart you must have to grieve so after your playmate ! But try to go to sleep, my child, while I sit here and watch you."

"Yes, Pony ! dear, good Pony !" sobbed the girl, yielding one hand to her nurse, and then turning her face towards the wall, where, like the child that she was, she soon after cried herself to sleep.

Then Melpomene laid Emolyn's hand upon the coverlet, and sunk back in the great arm-chair, and dozed comfortably until morning.

## CHAPTER IV.

### EMOLYN'S WOE.

Breathlessly, impatiently,
She longed to be free!—SHELLEY.

How terrible is the awakening from the first sleep after any great bereavement through death or departure !

In sleep we forget our griefs, or in dreams we are again with our beloved.

But we awake to the drear reality, and in doing so we suffer afresh the pangs of separation.

Such an awakening to sorrow seems like the dread "resurrection unto death !"

Emolyn, prostrated by the violent paroxysms of grief that had shaken nearly to dissolution her ill-gov-

erned nature, had slept the profound sleep of mental and bodily exhaustion—the sleep of forgetfulness, or of temporary death.

Her awakening was a resurrection to memory and to sorrow, and her first utterance was a cry of bitter anguish.

"Lonny is gone! Oh, Lonny is gone!"

This and the tempest of sobs that followed it aroused Melpomene, who was comfortably dozing in the old arm-chair.

"Oh, my dear honey, don't take on so 'bout Marse Lonny Bruce going to sea! 'Deed a body might think he was your own dear brother as you'd parted from, only you hasn't got any brother; or even your sweetheart, only you's too young to have a sweetheart! Don't take on so, honey! 'Deed and 'deed you'll heave yourself into a spell of sickness, and then there!" said Melpomene, while she arose and went to the dressing-table and brought a bottle of eau-de-cologne to her young lady.

As she was bathing Emolyn's face with this fragrant restorative there came a rap at the door.

Melpomene went and opened it.

"Here's Mrs. Palmer, the laundress, come to see Miss Emolyn, and won't 'liver of her message to anybody else! Is Miss Emolyn awake yet?" spoke the voice of Monica, the cook.

"Yes, Miss Emolyn *is* wake; which she's poorly, and can't see no wisiters, rich *nor* poor," replied Melpomene.

"Oh, let Mrs. Palmer come in, dear Pony! I wanted to see her, anyway, and I do suppose she wants help, poor thing. Tell Monica to bring her up at once," said Emolyn from her bed.

Melpomene delivered her message, and in a few minutes Mrs. Palmer entered the room.

She was a plump, black-eyed, and black-haired little woman of about thirty years of age, and was neatly dressed in a cheap, dark calico gown and sun-bonnet and cape to match.

"Pony! You go down and get your own breakfast, and then bring me a cup of tea. Mrs. Palmer will stay with me until you return," said Emolyn.

"Very well, honey!" said Pony. "But you, ma'am," she added, turning to Mrs. Palmer, "don't you talk too much to my young mist'ess, cause if you do you'll make her worse, and she's quite poorly enough now, and so I tell you good."

When Melpomene had left the room, Emolyn hastily dried her eyes, and beckoned the visitor to come to her bedside.

"I'm very sorry to find you so unwell, Miss," said the kindly little woman, approaching.

"It is only a headache," replied Emolyn, using the plea for all such cases made and provided. "But I am glad you have come, Mrs. Palmer, for I wished very much to see you to-day. First of all, however, tell me how I can help you."

"Bless your good heart, Miss, it was not for myself I came this morning, but to bring you a letter."

"A letter!" echoed Emolyn, in perplexity, for she certainly did not expect a letter that day, when she had only parted from Lonny on the preceding night.

"Yes, Miss," answered the woman, fumbling in her pocket, and producing from it a large thick packet. "This here letter was brought to my house early this very morning by one of Captain Bruce's marines, which he told me as I was to bring it to you, and put it into your own hands, Miss, which that was the reason I wouldn't send it up by any of the servants. So here it is, Miss."

"Oh, thanks!" exclaimed Emolyn, as she received the missive. "Now pray sit down and rest while I read my letter."

Mrs. Palmer seated herself in the big arm-chair where Pony had passed the night.

"It is some last word or pledge from my poor Lonny," Emolyn mentally added, as she opened the large envelope.

And so it was.

First dropped out a little note addressed to herself in Lonny's hand; then followed a thick letter sealed and directed to Lonney's father, Commander Bruce.

Emolyn stared at the last mentioned letter, not being able to understand why Lonny, who was in his father's house at the time, should have enclosed to her a letter to his father.

But she quickly slipped it under her pillow, so eager was she to read Lonney's note.

It was a boy's frank, affectionate expression of his feelings:

NAVY YARD, JULY 7.

When I left you last night, my dearest Linny, I was filled with anxiety for the safety of my darling.

When I reached home I was sorely tempted to confess our marriage to my parents and invoke their protection for my gentle, helpless little wife during my long absence.

I should certainly have done so but for my promise to you; that restrained me; for an officer and a gentlemen (wrote the little middy) must keep his pledge word, "even though it be to his own hurt," and what is more to the hurt of her who is dearer, far dearer to him than his own life.

So I forebore to make the confession that I had promised you not to make.

But after I had bid my mother good-night and retired to my own room, oh ! Linny, in the solemn hour of solitude, I felt that in coaxing you into a private marriage I have done you a grievous wrong, that I would give my life now to undo.

Instead of insuring your safety and happiness, as I had hoped to do and as I should have done, had you only let me tell my parents of our union, I have endangered your peace and honor.

Feeling all this so keenly, I could not compose myself to sleep. I have not been to bed at all. I have spent the night in writing a long letter to my father, confessing our marriage and invoking his and my mother's care for you.

Oh, Linny ! if you love me ; if you care for yourself, whom I love better than life or all life holds of good—revoke your resolution, and take the enclosed letter to my father. Do not be afraid of him ; he will receive you as a daughter ; he will receive you with open arms ; for my father is a true and loyal gentleman, and never to a lady would he utter one word, send one glance of reproach—however severely he may feel inclined to censure my conduct in this matter.

Ah, Linny ! if you would only do this and write to me that you had done so, and that you were safe in my dear mother's care, how happy you would make me !

But if you cannot summon courage to do this, at least keep my letter to my father safe by you ; for, Linny, the time may come when you may sorely need a friend, which you cannot find in your invalid uncle, and will not find in your enemy, Mrs. Warde. Where, then, can you turn but to my father and mother, who are yours also because they are mine ?

Oh, Linny ! how I repent and deplore my weakness in yielding to your timidity and promising to keep our

marriage a secret from my father and mother! My soul is filled with alarm for you, and cannot be quieted but by the intelligence that you are in my father's house as his acknowledged daughter-in-law!

I, who have not prayed much in my thoughtless life, pray now by day and by night that heaven may save and bless you, and forgive your erring but devoted lover and husband, LEONIDAS BRUCE.

Oh! how Emolyn cried over this letter, forgetting the presence of Mrs. Palmer, whose tender eyes were suffused with sympathetic tears.

"Is it such bad news, dear?" at last inquired the good soul.

"Ye-yes," sobbed Emolyn, telling a little fib—"bad news! Young Mr. Leonidas—das—Bruce has gone to sea on a thre—three years' voyage, and I am so sor—sorry for—for—his father and mother! Their only son, you know, and gone for so long!"

"Ah, what a tender heart you have, Miss, to weep so for other people's woes," said Mrs. Palmer, sympathetically.

Poor Emolyn made no reply, but, ashamed of receiving unmerited praise, turned her face to the wall and felt like a deep hypocrite.

"Oh, how I wish I could do something for you, Miss Emolyn! Something for you who have done so much—"

"I have done nothing but my duty, Mrs. Palmer, and scarcely even that! But you can do me a great service if you please," sighed Emolyn.

"Oh, tell me what!" eagerly responded the woman.

"You can take in the letters that the postman will bring you for me, and you can fetch them to me quietly as you have done this."

"Oh, with all my heart, Miss Emolyn!"

"Thanks, I will depend on you, dear soul."

"Indeed you may, Miss Emolyn."

"I am sure of it, but now tell me about your own affairs."

The poor woman then began to talk of her husband, who fortunately had now as much work as any day-laborer could do, or "jump at," as his wife expressed it; and of her children, who were happily all now well; and of her own lady customers, who paid her rather more liberally than heretofore.

In the midst of these revelations, Melpomene returned to the room bringing in a small breakfast-tray laden with a cup of tea and a plate of toast.

Then the laundress arose and took leave.

Pony would have persuaded Emolyn to keep her bed all day, and, indeed, the girl's state of weakness seemed to require her to do so; but she had to answer Lonny's letter, and to post hers that day, so it might reach him before his ship should sail.

She got out of bed and dressed herself, with Pony's assistance.

And then, as soon as she had taken her tea and toast, she sent her attendant out of the room and sat down to write to Lonny.

Her letter was but the reiteration of all her former arguments why she could not face Commander and Mrs. Bruce with a confession of the secret marriage. But she promised that she would keep his letter to his father, and, in case of need, present it to him. Then giving him love for love, prayers for prayers, and blessings for blessings, she closed her letter.

Finally she put on her hat and shawl, slipped out of the house, and took her letter to the post-office, where she dropped it into the box.

The walk had been a long one, so that on her return to Green Point she had to go to her room and lie down

Three days later than this, she received another letter from Lonny Bruce—a letter written on the eve of sailing, acknowledging the receipt of hers, expressing the deepest regret that she still refused to follow his advice in presenting his letter to his father, and seeking his mother's protection ; but still adjuring her to do so in case of necessity. He told her that this would be the last letter he could send, until on the sea he should meet some homeward-bound vessel. And commending her to the care of Heaven, he closed it.

The same day that Emolyn received this letter, she heard that Commander Bruce had returned from New York, after having seen his son off on his voyage.

Now Emolyn felt that her lover-husband was gone indeed beyond her reach, beyond recall, and she sank into a state of despondency too deep for tears or lamentations.

A few days passed in this way.

She had no father, mother, sister, brother, or friend. So, in the utter loneliness and dreariness of her heart, she even stooped to try to conciliate her scornful enemy, Mrs. Warde.

It was on the fourth day after the sailing of the *Eagle*, when the major's widow and the general's child were seated at the breakfast-table—Mrs. Warde, silent, contemptuous, and very depressing ; Emolyn Wyndeworth, lonely, desolate, longing for kindly companionship—when the latter said :

"I understand that my cousin Belinda is coming here to spend the summer holidays. I have never seen her, but I shall be very glad to see her."

"Then you will be disappointed. Miss Warde can never enter these doors while *you* remain an inmate

of this house," replied Mrs. Warde, with freezing hauteur.

Emolyn opened her blue eyes wide with amazement.

"Why not, Cousin Malvina?" she naively inquired.

"Because I do not consider you a proper companion for my daughter," insolently replied the elder woman.

"Oh, Cousin Malvina! Why?" innocently demanded Emolyn.

"You know best! It is a degradation to gentlewomen, even to enter into the discussion of such subjects. But I must trouble you, when you have occasion to speak of myself or my daughter, to call us Mrs. or Miss Warde. We decline to be considered as relatives of *yours*."

Emolyn made no reply. She longed to be admitted, if only once, to the bedside of her paralyzed and insensible uncle, if only to look upon the face of one who loved her. But this longing she knew would never be satisfied.

From this day forth, Mrs. Warde never spoke to Emolyn Wyndeworth.

They met three times a day, at breakfast, dinner, and supper; but the lady of the house, as Malvina Warde claimed to be, always maintained a contemptuous silence—silently placing the cup of coffee, or the plate of meat, upon the salver of the waiter, and allowing him to serve it to her enforced companion.

But Emolyn could not feel all the pangs that were thus prepared for her; because, poor little soul, she had anxieties that made her indifferent to these insults, as the terrible "moxo" makes one insensible to the headache!

For weeks had passed, and months were passing, yet

since the letter he had written on the eve of sailing she had heard no news of Lonney.

And, moreover, now, a great danger was threatening her, and a great terror growing upon her.

## CHAPTER V.

### EMOLYN'S DANGER.

I stand by the river where both of us stood,
And there is but one shadow to darken the flood:
And the path leading to it, where both used to pass,
Has the step but of one, to take dew from the grass—
One forlorn since that day.
The flowers by the margin are many to see,
For none stoops at my bidding to pluck them for me;
The bird in the alder sings loudly and long,
For my low sound of weeping disturbs not his song,
As thy vow did that day!

E. B. BROWNING.

Summer had faded into autumn, and autumn into winter, while no change for the better came over the household of Green Point.

Captain Wyndeworth lay, lingering, as so many paralytics do, neither quite living or dying.

Still Mrs. Warde devoted herself to the invalid, though rather to have the captain's pay coming in than to keep the father breathing.

Still poor Emolyn Bruce paled and wasted under the baleful blight of mysterious sorrow, and a yet more mysterious terror!

Each morning she went her weary way to Susan

Palmer, with fainter hope, and crept back to her dreary home with deeper despair. No letter came from her young sailor.

What could be the meaning of this utter silence?

Was Lonney indifferent or inconstant?

Was he ill or dead?

She could not answer these distracting questions even by conjecture.

A pall of darkness and silence seemed to have fallen upon the world, and she panted and gasped under it as under a nightmare.

It is true that she could easily have solved her doubts as to her boy's condition and whereabouts, if she had the courage to make simple and natural inquiries.

Commander Bruce was still a daily visitor to the bedside of his invalid brother officer, and nothing would have been more natural than for Emolyn to have asked him when he heard from his son, had not the consciousness of her secret marriage tied her tongue. For so great was her fear that anyone should even suspect, not to say discover the secret, that she forebore *now* to ever allude to Leonidas Bruce, even in the presence of her faithful and beloved "Pony."

Emolyn was, perhaps, morbid on this subject, for she was most fatally reserved.

She used to watch and listen for some chance word concerning Lonny or his ship, the *Eagle*, to drop from the lips of Mrs. Warde, or Commander Bruce; but in vain. There was little opportunity of seeing or hearing the commander, unless she had pointedly met him at the front door and asked him questions; for on entering the house he invariably walked straight up stairs to Captain Wyndeworth's sick room, and in coming down again, when his visit was over, he would be attended to the door and let out by Mrs. Warde in person. So you

see there was no possibility of her hearing from Lonny through his father, unless she had stopped him to ask questions, which she had not the courage to do.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Warde, in her turn, watched the unhappy girl, and smiled sarcastically Whenever Emolyn met one of these sneering grins, she trembled with the thought that Mrs. Warde suspected her secret, and purposely prevented her from having any conversation with the old commander beyond the usual "good-morning."

Emolyn's fears did not deceive her.

Mrs. Warde not only suspected Emolyn's secret, but knew more about it than did the young wife herself.

Mrs. Warde had pass-keys to every lock in the house, and had availed herself of the girl's daily absence to look over every one of her letters and papers, to possess herself of some, and to destroy others.

Some weeks later, Emolyn, wishing to read again Lonny's love-letters, went to seek them. After a long and fruitless search, however, she said to herself:

"I have hidden them so securely that I cannot even find them myself, though I know I shall come across them some day while looking for something else. But, at any rate, if *I* cannot find them, no one else can, and that is a comfort."

Emolyn never once suspected that her locks had been violated, her cabinet searched, and her papers purloined by her bitterest enemy; for the girl, though rendered so secretive by natural timidity and adverse circumstance, was essentially unsuspicious.

In the meantime, Mrs. Warde discovered from these readings what an utter coward the poor child was, and how impossible it would be for her, even under the most desperate circumstances, to reveal her real relationship to Commander Bruce's family, unless such rela

tion could be encouraged by daily and friendly conversation. Therefore it was her plan to keep the commander and his unknown daughter-in-law as far apart and as much estranged as possible.

Farther than this even, her basely-acquired knowledge furnished her with tools to dig a pit-fall for the feet of Emolyn Bruce. And partly because she hated the girl, and wished her ill, and partly because she envied the heiress and coveted her estate, Malvina Warde planned the destruction of Emolyn Bruce.

About this time she had engaged, as an assistant in her father's sick room, a nurse called Ann Whitlock, whom she had soon discovered to be addicted to pilfering.

At first Mrs. Warde carefully secured all her drawers and closets, with the resolution to discharge the woman as soon as she should be able to procure a successor, and in the meanwhile to say nothing to Whitlock about her small thefts.

Now, however, she suddenly resolved to entrap this woman into her power, and make her the instrument of Emolyn Bruce's ruin and death.

So she kept the unsuspicious pilferer in her service for some little time, praised her for attention to the sick man, smiled on her and trusted her.

One day, while dressing to go down to dinner, she carefully locked up her casket of jewels and put her keys into the pocket of her morning wrapper, which she had not yet left off. Then, when she changed it for a silk dress, she left it lying over the back of the chair, and went out of the room, with a great rustling, down the stairs, but, before going into the dining-room, she crossed to the rear of the house and crept noiselessly up the back stairs and stole into a back chamber, and through that silently

entered the clothes-closet, where she concealed herself while she watched the proceedings of the thief.

Meanwhile, the ensnared pilferer, as soon as she heard the rustling footsteps of her mistress die away in silence at the lower end of the staircase, carefully locked the chamber door, and then proceeded to search the pocket of her dressing-gown, whence she drew forth the bunch of keys.

With a frightened look all around her, she went to the casket, unlocked it, looked at its contents with avaricious eyes for a moment, and eagerly but fearfully snatched a heavy gold necklace and locket and slipped them into her pocket. Next she hastily picked out a set of pearl earrings and brooch, and also a diamond ring, which she put with the locket and chain.

Then she carefully relocked the casket, withdrew the key, and went and hoisted a front window, and dropped the bunch down into the deep shrubbery beneath, muttering :

"There ! she will think the keys are mislaid when she looks for them ; and, as for me, I can get out and stow away these ere things afore the casket can be opened and the jewels missed."

"*Will you?*" hissed the tongue of the serpent Malvina Warde, as she darted from her ambush and closed her hand upon the pocket of the thief.

"Oh, ma'am, for the love of mercy !—I—was only a borrowin' of these ornimints to wear to—to—a church festival—to-morrow mornin', ma'am, if you—could spare me !" stammered the detected sinner, too faint from fear to resist the act of her detector, who held a tight grip upon the pocket and its contents.

"You did not mean to steal them?" sneered Mrs. Warde,

"Oh, no, indeed, ma'am!" answered the woman, who was as white as death and trembling as with an ague.

"Didn't mean to steal them? Convince the jury of that when they find you guilty of grand larceny. Convince the judge of that when he sentences you to the penitentiary for ten years!" answered the lady.

"Oh! oh, lord! oh, ma'am! You wouldn't! No, you wouldn't! Not for this world's sinful jewels and vanities and things, you wouldn't send a poor, lone woman to prison!" howled Whitlock, dropping down on the floor in abject terror.

"Yes, I would, and I will," grimly retorted Mrs. Warde, looking steadily down upon the wretch whom she had tempted to crime, so that crime should lay her where she now was, a slave in chains at the feet of her mistress.

"Yes, I would, and I will, send you to imprisonment and hard labor in the penitentiary for ten years, and that will be for life with *you*, for you will not live through all that so long," ruthlessly replied the lady.

The woman began to howl and weep, to beg and pray, to roll on the floor and to grovel at the feet of her mistress.

"Be silent! If Captain Wyndeworth should be shocked out of his repose by your noise, that shock will certainly kill him, and that will not improve your circumstances. Rise now, and attend to me."

"Oh, lord! Oh, ma'am! Oh, have mercy on a poor, lone creetur, who meant no harm!" cried the woman, struggling up to her feet.

"Hush, and listen. I certainly would, and I certainly *will*, send you to the State prison for grand larceny—"

"Oh! Oh, lord! Oh!" recommenced the howling wretch.

"Silence, and hear me out!" cried Mrs. Warde, with a fierce stamp.

"Oh, yes, ma'am! Yes, I am at your mercy! I am at your mercy!" wept the woman, wringing her hands.

"I will punish you, as I said, unless you swear to obey me in all things henceforth!" said Mrs. Warde, grimly, concluding her interrupted sentence.

"I will be your servant and slave forever and ever, soul and body, goodness knows I will, if so be you won't bring me to court for this and send me to prison!"

"If you will keep your promise—be my servant, soul and body, not forever and ever, but so long as I shall require you—no harm shall come to you. Moreover, if you do this, when you are permitted to leave my service, you shall be promoted to a better one!"

"Oh, ma'am, I will! I will!"

"Now swear that you will do so."

The woman obeyed and took an awful oath, by which, in binding herself to the will of Malvina Warde, she sold her soul to the arch fiend. And then the poor wretch fell to howling and weeping again.

"Be quiet now, and give me back my jewels! Not a word to anyone of what has passed; but remember that I hold your character and your liberty in my power, and that on the slightest hesitation on your part to do my will, I shall deliver you up to justice. Remember that I have bought you, and you are mine, soul and body!"

And this was true, only because the poor wretch, in her detected guilt, her terror, perplexity and utter ignorance, could not know that Mrs. Warde had threatened much more than she would, afterwards, under the circumstances, have the power to accomplish.

Malvina Warde, having entrapped the thief, recovered her jewels and gained a reckless instrument of

evil, coolly and patiently bided her time and opportunity to use this instrument for the destruction of Emolyn.

That day, at dinner, her smiles were even more than usually sarcastic, as her cold, cruel, black eyes slowly measured Emolyn from head to foot, noting the careless dishabille of shawl and wrapper in which she had come to the table; but she uttered no rebuke, asked no question, made no comment. Her hatred could afford to be silent now.

And how was it with her proposed victim?

Emolyn daily grew worse in mind and body. Her situation was in every respect desperate. Though a wedded wife, she could not, for very cowardice, claim her position as such; though a wealthy heiress, she could not obtain a dollar of money to supply her commonest need, for since her old guardian's paralysis, he could sign no checks for her, and she could draw no funds; and Mrs. Warde would have seen her perish sooner than have advanced her the price of a pair of shoes.

So, little by little, Emolyn had sold her few trinkets to supply her most urgent needs and those of the poor whom she still wished to succor. She had done this through the agency of Mrs. Palmer, who disposed of the trinkets among the people for whom she washed. But the price realized from them was but small, for Emolyn had fewer jewels than other young girls of smaller fortune, for she never spent much on her personal adornments, because she took so much more pleasure in spending on the poor.

But now, with all her wealth and all her benevolence, she had no money in hand either to spend on herself or to give to others; no smallest jewel left (except her sacred wedding-ring, which she wore on a ribbon

around her neck, and concealed in her bosom), that she could sell for money.

Yet not for herself did she regret this; for ah! she had heavier troubles to bear than the temporary want of money! But for her poor she did lament it!

When in the beginning of the winter, John Palmer got out of work, and his wife's customers fell off, and the humble household began to show the signs of want, Emolyn's tender heart ached for the sufferings she was so powerless to alleviate!

But soon after this a crushing blow fell upon the fated girl! Early in the new year she missed the daily visits of Commander Bruce, and soon learned from the gossip of the servants that he was staying at home, prostrated by a great sorrow.

In a word, the fate of the missing ship *Eagle*—long missing, though Emolyn had not known it—was now ascertained beyond all doubt.

She had been wrecked on the coast of Barbary. Her hulk had been discovered and identified by the United States ship-of-war *Xyphias*, of the Mediterranean squadron, and all her officers and crew were supposed to have perished.

## CHAPTER VI.

### NO ESCAPE.

A hopeless darkness gathers o'er her fate.—BAILLIE.

Emolyn heard these terrible events as though she heard them not. She made no comment, gave no sign; but from that day her despair deepened into stupor, from which nothing could rouse her, though

there were moments when her spirit would break from this dark trance as suddenly, as fearfully as lightning blazes from the blackest cloud.

Melpomene, anxiously watching her young mistress, became greatly alarmed.

"Oh, my darling Miss Emolyn! What *has* come over you? Tell your own Pony, dear? Tell her, no matter what it is!" she prayed, when one day at the dinner-hour, she discovered the girl, still sitting in her chamber, clothed in her wrapper and shawl, and crouching down in a low chair before the fire.

For many minutes her young mistress did not even notice the question; but when it was repeated and pressed, Emolyn answered, stupidly:

"Nothing!"

"Nothing—oh, Miss Emolyn! You scarcely ever eat, nor sleep; you never speak unless spoken to, and you never dress yourself, but you sit here in your room, in your wrapper and shawl, day after day, with your head half the time down in your lap. Is *that* for nothing, darling Miss Emolyn? Oh, tell me! trust me! confide in me, Miss Emolyn, for your own sake, pray, *pray do!*" cried the woman, falling on her knees before the crouching girl and bursting into tears.

"Hush, Pony!" suddenly cried Emolyn, flashing out from her dark cloud. "Hush crying. *I* don't cry. And if I don't cry, no one in the wide world has a right to do so."

And then she grew darker, gloomier, more stupid than before; nor to any of Melpomene's prayers, tears, or expostulations would she utter one word.

But did the faithful creature give over her efforts to comfort and perhaps rescue her forlorn charge?

Not at all.

On another day she found her standing in the middle of the room gazing upon the carpet, as if entranced.

"Miss Emolyn," said the woman, softly approaching her.

The girl started as violently as if she had received a shock, exclaiming frantically:

"Oh, Pony! Something terrible is coming upon me! I know it! I see it! I feel it! Some terrible fate is approaching! Oh, Pony! let us fly from this horrible house!"

"So we will, my child!" said the nurse, as tenderly, as soothingly as she would have spoken to "humor" a sick babe.

"No, we can't either! I have got no money! I have got no friends! I have got no place to go to! No, I must stay here and let the mountain fall on me and crush me!" she wildly exclaimed.

"Miss Emolyn, there is times when I think you is insane. Oh, my darling, tell me and I will make oath on the blessed word never to tell no one else, if that will satisfy you! Oh, tell your poor Pony what has turned your brain, my darling!"

"I cannot! Oh, I cannot! I could die first! But I could tell my mother if she were living! Oh, my mother! Oh, my mother! Oh, my mother!" cried the desolate child, bursting into tears—the first tears she had shed in many months.

Melpomene was glad to see this as a good sign; but it proved a fallacious one on this occasion; for the paroxysm passed and left her, as her outbreaks always did, weaker and worse than before.

"Miss Emolyn, dear, if you want to go away for peace and safety, I'll sell the last rag of clothes I own, 'cept 'tis what I have on my back, and I'll take you,

whether or no, wherever you want to go, if I'm killed for it the next minute !" said Melpomene, fervently.

"Oh, no, no, Pony ! That would only get you into trouble and do me no good. No,"—with a sigh—"let the deluge come ! I deserve it !"

"Oh, Miss Emolyn ! Don't say that ! You deserve to be happy because you are good ! You deserve the garden of Eden and not Noah's flood !" cried poor Pony.

But her unhappy mistress had relapsed into a dark and sullen mood, and no more words could be drawn from her.

At another time Pony tried to arouse her beloved foster-child to some interest in her neighbors. So one morning she said :

"Do you know, Miss Emolyn, darling, that old Priest Ned has gone to his heavenly home ?"

"That is well," answered Emolyn. But when Melpomene would have given all the details of the old hermit's death, she found she had lost her listener—Emolyn had sunk into lethargy again as a sword sinks in its sheath.

On another morning, Melpomene said to her :

"I'm sorry to say it, Miss Emolyn, but poor Palmer's folks is in great trouble. He's down with the rheumatism, and she's got so bad now, she can't wash no more, which they do say as she'll have to go into the Women's Hospital, when her time comes, anyway !"

The poor, half-crazed girl lifted her pale face and perplexed eyes. The call of suffering reached her sympathies through all her own stupor of despair.

"Pony ! take my silk dress and velvet mantle and carry them to a second-hand clothes shop, and sell them for what you can get, and give the money to poor Susan Palmer."

"But, Miss Emolyn, my darling, if I do that you will not have a single decent thing left to go out in the street with," Pony expostulated, glad to think that she had aroused her mistress at last.

"I do not want to go out in the street; and—their need is greater than mine!" said Emolyn, and then she withdrew within herself, as a turtle in its shell, and could not be drawn out again.

Her stupor was now so deep and so long that Pony was not sorry when one night she had a piece of really startling news to tell her.

"What do you think, Miss Emolyn?" she began, while combing out her pet's long, nut-brown hair—"what *do* you think? Mrs. Commander Bruce is dead! She has been failing ever since she heard of the wreck of the *Eagle* with Master Lonny on board, you know, and last night she died. And they do say as the commander has applied for sailing orders because he can't get over his wife's death, staying here."

Emolyn made no comment.

"Miss Emolyn, did you hear me say as Mrs. Commander Bruce was dead?"

"Yes—what a privilege it is to die! Oh, life is terrible! But *death*, Pony?—Life is a disease of which death cures us! Life is a penal servitude from which death relieves us? Life is a sentence of execution from which death pardons us! Oh, when shall you and I be pardoned and released and cured, Pony?" wearily sighed the girl.

"Life is very sweet, Miss Emolyn," said the woman.

"You think so; but it is your delusion?" persisted Emolyn.

"Ah me! I'd most as lief see her in her coffin as out of her mind!" thought Pony to herself.

She had quite come to the conclusion that her young

mistress was slightly insane, as well as greatly distressed.

A'ter this little flash of intelligence, Emolyn sank ir to ierself as the flame of an expiring lamp sinks into its socket.

Early in March the long expected blow fell on the household at Green Point. The long-suffering Captain Wyndeworth, during one of the stormiest nights in the month of the year, fell into a sweet sleep from which he never awoke again in this world.

It was Pony who had to break the news to Emolyn.

She did this when she went into the young lady's chamber to wait on her in the morning.

"Well, my poor dear, the will of Heaven be done! You know your poor uncle was quite a very old man, and has been a very great sufferer for most a year past. So what could we expect, honey?" began the poor creature, in the best way she knew how.

"Is he gone, then?" inquired Emolyn, in so low a tone that Pony scarcely heard her.

"Which you was a saying, honey?" vaguely inquired Pony. "Which you was asking—"

"Is he gone?"

'Home—yes, honey. Last night, 'bout twelve o'clock. Di dn't you hear the wind a blowin' like it would rip off the roof and blow down the walls? He never heard it. It never 'sturbed him, honey."

"Nothing will ever disturb him more—not even the miserable fate of his poor niece! Happy uncle! Now let the deluge come!" said Emolyn, in a quiet tone.

"Oh, honey! I do wish I could see you cry, or take on, or do something natural like!" sighed poor Pony, who was shocked at the seeming want of feeling in her young mistress.

But Emolyn was much farther gone in the stupor of

despair than she ever had been before. Emolyn did not put on mourning for her uncle. Indeed she could not have done so even if she had been disposed, for she had neither money in her purse, nor accounts at any store; nor could she have brought herself to ask Mrs, Warde for an advance, or to ask any merchant for credit.

She attended the funeral, which took place on the third day after the death, when the remains of the aged naval officer were interred in the cemetery with all the sacred ceremonies of the church and all the glorious honors of war.

And during all the solemn pageantry of death, poor Emolyn acted the part of mute more naturally and perfectly than any professional and paid mute ever did.

All who saw her that day remarked her look of dumb despair. Those who had known her well in brighter days said among themselves:

"That girl seems quite stupefied with sorrow for the death of her old uncle."

"Yet she has not on a scrap of mourning," observed some others.

"Ah! when the heart is oppressed with grief, it cares little for the external show."

These critics were both right and wrong. Emolyn's heart was indeed too heavily bowed down to care for any of the conventional exhibitions of life; but it was not with sorrow for her uncle's death; it was with trouble deeper than death could bring. She felt the approach of some overwhelming fate, without the power of resistance or flight, without the knowledge of into what abyss of ruin it was about to hurl her.

By the death of Captain Wyndeworth the occupation of Whitlock, the sick-nurse and Mrs. Warde's sworn slave, was gone; but the woman remained in the house,

tacitly waiting orders from that lady, who at length condescended to give them.

It was about a week after the funeral that Malvina Warde sent for the nurse to come to her room, and when closeted with her, said :

"Do you know that your time has been up here for several days?"

"Yes, ma'am, but I was staying your pleasure to keep me, or to send me away," humbly replied the woman.

"I believe you were employed in the Woman's Hospital before you came into my service?"

"Yes, ma'am, and left it to come to you, much ag'in the will of the doctors, who wanted me to stay," replied the nurse, trying to make interest for herself with Mrs. Warde.

"Ah, indeed! That seems very kind of you. May I ask why you favored me with the preference?" sarcastically inquired the lady.

"Well, ma'am," began the nurse, fearing to tell a falsehood to a sharp woman who had her in her power, "I did prefer service in private families, because, as a rule, the work is lighter and the living is better, let alone the wages being higher, than in hospitals."

"I like your candor. Now, however, that your duties are over here, I advise your return to the Woman's Hospital."

"And you won't tell on me, and make me lose my place, ma'am?" whimperingly inquired the poor wretch.

"Not if you obey my orders and do my will; but if you refuse to do so, I shall not only 'tell on you' and make you lose your situation, but I shall prosecute you at law for the theft of my jewelry, and send you to the

State prison for at least ten years," said Mrs. Warde, grimly.

The trembling culprit held down her head and made no answer.

"I do not think, however, that you will refuse to obey me," added Mrs. Warde, with a grim smile.

"Tell me what you want me to do, ma'am, and I will do it, if mortal power can," faltered the woman.

"That is it! If it be in 'mortal power.' The service I require of you depends for its success on fortuitous circumstances; but an effort shall be made, for success will be worth all it costs. I will tell you what you must do in the first place, however. Go back to your old post in the Woman's Hospital."

"Will you recommend me, ma'am?"

Mrs. Warde laughed harshly as she replied:

"Yes, I recommend you to go there, but I could not possibly recommend the hospital to engage you; nor do you need that I should do so. The faculty there think they know you. Let them think it still, until you deceive *me*, then they shall know you."

"I will never deceive you, ma'am," faltered the nurse.

"I do not think that you will! Well, after you are reinstated in your old place, you must slip out and come to me secretly every night, to learn my wishes."

"Yes, ma'am."

"And you must never mention to any one where you are going. You must never breathe my name, or refer to me in the least particular, as you value your liberty."

"I will do in all things as you tell me, ma'am."

"I think you will. Now that is all for to-night: pack up and go, and be sure to be here to-morrow night, about this hour."

This miserable slave of Satan left the house the same evening, recovered her situation at the Woman's Hospital the next morning, and returned secretly to Green Point the next night, when she had a private interview with Mrs. Warde, in which she received that lady's further instructions.

One day near the last of March, poor Emolyn roused from her frozen apathy to ask Melpomene :

" Pony, do you know anything about Susan Palmer? She has not been to see me so long !"

" Lor', honey, Mrs. Palmer done went inter the Wimmin's Horsepittal yesterday, which it was crowded so full that they couldn't take her before, and she's so near her time, too. They had to wait till the marine's wife was well enough to be sent away. Honey, they do say as there's more than fifty poor women and babies in that hospital now. But lor', I reckon that can't be so, though the times *is* awful hard this winter. Thanks be to goodness, the winter's most over now," observed Melpomene.

Emolyn had relapsed into silence, and sat as usual, wrapped in a large shawl, on a low chair before the fire in her room, with her head bent down upon her lap, and her face covered with her hands. After a pause she spoke again :

" Where are the poor children of this mother?"

" Home 'long o' their daddy, honey, and he so crippled up with the rheumatiz that he ain't able to do nothing but stay home and take care o' them ; and the church he 'longs to 'lows him a dollar a week for vittals and fire-wood," replied the woman.

But Emolyn might have been asleep or dead for any notice she took of this information, either by word or gesture. After a few minutes, however, she startled

Pony, who was then thinking of something else, by saying:

"Listen to what I say to you. Gather up all my dresses, shawls, bonnets and laces and take them to the second-hand clothing store and sell them for what they will bring. Then take the money to Palmer for his children. They cannot live on a dollar a week."

"Goodness gracious me alive, Miss Emolyn! If I go and do that you won't have a rag left you to put on!" expostulated Melpomene.

"I have my wrappers and under-clothing. That is all I shall ever want again, Pony. Now, do not disobey me, in my misery, but go and execute my orders, as if I were in my father's halls at Wynde Slopes, with all its revenues at my command, instead of being the poor wreck that I am," said Emolyn, in a voice as firm as it was sad.

"Miss Emolyn, it breaks my heart to hear you speak so," sobbed the woman.

"Hush, this moment, Pony! *I* do not cry! and if *I* do not, then nobody on earth has a right to shed tears. Go and do as I bid you! Do not defy me because I am penniless and helpless with all my wealth! Go and sell my dresses and take the money to Palmer. The children must not be left to suffer."

Melpomene, with many shakes of her pretty head, went and obeyed about half her young lady's order—that is to say, she took about half the articles from the wardrobes of her mistress, and disposed of them as she had been directed to do, afterwards devoting the price she had received for them to relieve the necessities of the needy Palmer children.

A few days after this, Emolyn suddenly said to her.

"Pony, I want money! I must have a dollar! I *must* have a dollar!"

"Oh, Miss Emolyn! We have got nothing else to sell! Why not ask Mrs. Warde? She could not be such a demon as to refuse you!"

"What! ask *her*, who never volunteered to advance funds to give me a decent black dress to attend her father's and my uncle's funeral? I would see her in perdition first! I would even sell *this* first!" she said, detaching from her neck a black ribbon, with a heavy plain gold ring upon it.

"Why, that must have been your mother's wedding-ring, Miss Emolyn?"

"No; but it was a keepsake given to me by a dear friend, who is gone. What is its value, do you think, Pony?"

"This heavy, guinea gold ring must be worth about ten dollars, Miss Emolyn," replied the woman, as she received the ring from her mistress and weighed it in her own hand.

"Then perhaps you will not be obliged to sell it. If it is worth ten or even eight dollars, you can surely get an advance of one dollar on it from a pawnbroker."

"Yes, Miss, I could. But, oh, that the daughter of General Wyndeworth and the heiress of Wynde Slopes should be forced to pawn her ring!"

"'There are worse disasters at sea,' Pony!—*yes, and elsewhere too!*" muttered Emolyn in reply. "But now put on your bonnet and shawl and go pawn that ring and bring me back a dollar as quickly as you can."

Pony sighed deeply and left the room to prepare for her long walk. In two hours she returned from her errand, bringing the required sum and the pawnbroker's ticket.

Later in the afternoon of the same day, while Melpomene was down in the kitchen, eating her dinner,

Emolyn Bruce wrapped herself in a long, black cloth cloak, drew its hood over her head, crept noiselessly down the stairs and left the house.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A CRISIS.

So farewell hope and with hope, farewell fear;
Farewell remorse; all good to me is lost—
All hope is lost of my return; what worse?
For where no hope is left, is left no fear.—MILTON.

Meanwhile Melpomene, having finished her supper at the kitchen table, drew her stool to the chimney-corner and sat brooding in silence over the condition of her young mistress.

Within a few weeks past, slight suspicions of the real state of the case had troubled Pony's simple mind; but she had very promptly dismissed these intrusive doubts, as traitors to her lady; yet within a few days past they had returned with renewed strength, and refused to be silent; within the last few hours they had confirmed themselves into settled convictions.

Pony, though now thirty-five years of age, had never been a wife or mother; therefore perhaps the slowness of her mind to discover the truth concerning her unhappy young lady.

Now, however, having done so at last, she felt no hesitation as to her proper line of action.

She would speak to her young lady on the subject, however distressing and humiliating such a discussion might be to them both. She would warn her of the

danger into which she was drifting, the precipice over which she might be plunged; the yawning abyss of ruin below, into which she might fall; and she would save her, if possible, even at the risk of her own liberty, or life! She would do this at once, while her courage was screwed up "to the sticking point."

So, rising and leaving her fellow-servants chattering like a flock of magpies over some gossip of the day, she hastily ascended the three flights of stairs that led from the basement to the third floor, on which was Emolyn's apartment.

She entered hurriedly and found the room as she had left it, dimly lighted by the wood-fire, which the chilly evenings of early spring still rendered necessary; but the low chair on the rug, upon which she had expected to find the hapless girl crouching, as usual, was empty.

That slight circumstance did not at first awaken any fresh anxiety in the breast of Pony. She merely thought that perhaps her young lady had gone into the little dressing-room adjoining, and would soon return.

So Pony sat down on a low cushion in the chimney corner, to await Emolyn's reappearance.

She remained there about twenty minutes, which seemed to her two hours, and then she got up and opened the door of the dressing-room, which she found empty, then of a wardrobe room, which contained nothing but clothing, and very little of that.

Pony groaned:

"I never is right down easy in my own mine when that chile is outen my sight! I is allers thinking what she might be tempted to do in her 'stress! So many cases as I've heerd tell of like hern! But she sha'n't keep her secret to herself a preying on her mine, and a temptin' her to her 'struction, one day longer, not if *I* knows Pony Pollar! Now where can dat poor gall be

gone to? Not to ole missis' room, dat's certain! She jes' as soon go and poke her head into de fire! Maybe she's gone down into de parlor, cold, dark, lonesome ole place; make's a body's teeth chatter only to think of it; but I must go look after my chile, all de same!" concluded Melpomene, as she opened the chamber-door, hurried down the passage and down the three pairs of stairs, and into the dismal, dreary and deserted drawing-room.

It was as dark as pitch, but Pony groped her way to a match stand, struck a light and lighted a wax candle in a branch of a mantel chandelabra, which partly illumined the room.

But no sign of Emolyn's presence was to be seen.

She next took the candle from its resting-place and explored the apartment, calling softly on the name of her mistress, but a few minutes' investigation convinced her that Emolyn was not to be found there.

Then a great fear fell upon her.

"The Lord 'a' mercy upon me, where *is* that chile? Oh! if it should be a crowner's quest to-morrow, and a found drowned, or something!" she exclaimed, as she ran out of the drawing-room, and with the courage of despair, flew up stairs to Mrs. Warde's room to brave the lioness in her lair.

She found the lady seated before a bright coal fire, beside a table upon which stood an Astral lamp.

Mrs. Warde laid down the book she had been reading and looked up frowningly.

"If you please, ma'am, I have took the liberty to come to you about Miss Emolyn," said the alarmed woman.

"Ah!" aspirated the lady, and her black eyes, blacker than the deep mourning-dress she wore, fixed

themselves keenly, searchingly on the speaker's face—"what about her? Nothing good, I dare to say!"

"I can't find her anywhere. I'm afraid she has gone out," whimpered Pony, ready to cry with grief and terror.

"Quite likely. I always did suspect her of being a night-walker," sneered Mrs. Warde.

"MADAM!" indignantly exclaimed Melpomene, astonished and enraged out of all her usual fear of Mrs. Warde.

"But we can't keep the house open all night on her account. Tell Philip to close the doors and windows immediately," coolly continued the lady.

"I shall do no such thing!" muttered Pony to herself, as she swung out of the room and ran down stairs.

There in the hall her terrors came to an abrupt end, for there she met Emolyn face to face.

Emolyn, who had just been let in by the hall-footman, flushed, flurried, but radiant, defiant, triumphant, rushed past her maid and flew up the stairs towards her own room.

Pony, delighted to see her in safety again, but utterly bewildered at the transformation she had undergone, gazed after her, muttering:

"Well! if that chile hasn't gone stark, staring leaping mad, I dunno a fool from a genus, that's all?"

Then Pony slowly followed her mistress.

When she reached the third floor front room, she found Emolyn, already disrobed of her cloak and hood, standing before the dressing-bureau, apparently engaged in cautiously concealing something in the bosom of her gown.

"Oh, Miss 'Lyn, you did give me such a scare! Where in de world has you been, honey, this time o'

night?" inquired Pony, sinking exhausted upon her foot-stool.

"Been to seek my fortune, Pony! good Pony! and see, I have found it! You gave me a dollar, did you not? Well, I made the best investment I ever made in my life, for I have bought peace, safety, liberty, and escape from my foes. I got what I wanted for twenty-five cents. Here is seventy-five cents left. What riches it seems, Pony, doesn't it? And you may have it all to get your shoes mended, or buy a new pair of hose; for you are about as barefooted as I am, Pony!" exclaimed the girl, with a reckless gayety unlike herself, as she forced the change of her last dollar into Melpomene's hand.

"Oh, Miss Emolyn! Miss Emolyn! what *ever* have you been and bought?" whimpered poor Pony, as her hand closed upon the silver.

"Never you mind, Pony. Curiosity was fatal to Mother Eve and Bluebeard's wives, so take warning and don't ask questions," recklessly replied Emolyn.

"I do believe it's likker, and she's drank half of it. Poor chile! Poor, dear chile! But I don't smell no likker, so it can't be that."

But she put no more questions to Emolyn, seeing that it would be useless to do so in the girl's present mood.

"I don't know what the chile has been at. No, Lord knows, ef it was the last word I had to speak, I don't know what the chile has been doing to herself to-night. It ain't strong drink, I know; but she ain't in her right senses, now that is certain; so I must put off talking to her till to-morrow. I 'spose that will be time enough," sighed Pony, as she watched her young mistress, who now threw herself into an easy-chair and leaned back.

"Go to bed, Pony!" at length said Emolyn, very peremptorily.

"And leave you by yourself, and you not well!" pleaded the faithful creature.

"I am better than I have been for months, Pony. I am well and happy because I have means of escape. Go to bed when I tell you."

"Let me help you to undress, Miss Emolyn," persisted the woman.

"Now when did I ever require you to help me to undress, you foolish old Pony?"

"Not for a good many months, Miss Emolyn, to be sure. Not since that night when you took on so about Marse Lonny Bruce going away."

"*Ah!*" cried the girl, as if she had received a sudden stab.

"Oh, I didn't mean to hurt you, honey—I didn't!" moaned the woman.

"*Will* you obey me, when I order you to go to bed, Pony, or will you turn on me and defy me, because everyone else has gone from me, and I have no friend left in the world?" bitterly broke forth the girl.

"Oh, Miss Emolyn, I will go! I will leave you now, and talk to you to-morrow. Good-night, my chile! Good-night, and may the Lord keep you and bless you to-night and always!" said the woman, mournfully as she went and raised the hand of her hapless young mistress to her lips, and then turned and slowly left the room.

After a few minutes Emolyn arose and bolted both of the doors, and then drew from her bosom a small vial, not larger than her own forefinger, but filled to the stopper with a dark-brown liquid. She held it up between her eyes and the wax candles that stood burning in the brackets each side her dressing-glass, and she looked at it, with a strange, grim smile, muttering to herself:

"To carry pure death in an ear-ring, a casket,
A signet, a fan mount, a filagree basket"—

or even in such a little wee wine bottle as this! Now I am armed to meet my fate; here is my shield against all blows, my refuge from all foes, my cure from all ills. DEATH! I do not fear death, I never did. I fear *life!* I do not fear the Lord, for I know that He is Love. I fear *men and women!* And, like the old Scotch Covenantor of the story, 'I would rather trust my soul with the Lord than my body with these devils!' So lay you here, little vial—little friend—little deliverer—until the last hour comes, then you must save me from something worse than death—from the eyes of hateful women and scornful men!"

And so saying, this miserable girl, insane from long and lonely brooding over misfortunes but half understood, deposited the bottle within the folds of her underdress, that, night or day, it might be at hand.

Then she undressed and went to bed.

Wearied from her long walk, she soon fell asleep, and for the first time, in many weeks, slept through the night.

Not so her faithful Melpomene, who lay awake, devising plans how to save her beloved young mistress, until morning dawned and the sun rose.

Then Pony got up and put on her clothes and went into her young lady's room.

"I shall not rise this morning, Pony. I am very, very tired. Perhaps they will let you bring me a cup of tea to my bedside," said Emolyn languidly.

"When you say 'they,' you mean Mrs. Mal., for nobody in the house would object to your having anything you want but that she-wolf, Miss Emolyn; and whether she does or not you shall have your cup of tea! Lord

forgive me! that 'oman makes me feel wickeder than ever I thought I could be! Why, chile, I feel as if I'd jes' as lief kill her as look at her; yes, and a heap liefer, too; for I can't abide to look at her, and that is the Lord's truth!" muttered Pony as she left the room on her errand.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A PLAN.

**What remains when hope has fled?—CAMPBELL.**

In a short time Pony returned, bearing a little tray, upon which was arranged a dainty little cup of tea and a delicate round of toast.

Emolyn partook of both, and then lay back on her pillow as if refreshed.

Pony took the tray with its empty little service and carried it out to the hall, where she left it for the present on a side-table. Then she returned and seated herself beside the bed, determined that she would break the subject that so oppressed her faithful heart to Emolyn herself.

She hemmed and ha'ed and paused, then she offered up a short, silent prayer for help, and began:

"Miss Emolyn, honey, does yer think as there's a human being in this whole, wide worle as loves you better'n I do?"

"I know there is not a human being on earth who loves me except you, Pony," mournfully replied the desolate girl.

"Poor chile! poor chile! to have only Pony to love

you, when all the world would love you if they knew you as Pony does! And, Miss Emolyn, you know I love you so that, no matter *what* should happen, I should love you all the same! And no matter *what* you might do, I should love you still as much as ever! And if all the world was to turn against you, I should love you *all the more!* Miss Emolyn, you believe that, don't you?"

"Yes, Pony, I do."

"Well, then, my dear young lady, if I can help you in any way, only tell me how! You know that I would die to save you, don't you, Miss Emolyn?"

"Oh, Pony, I hope not! I am not worth dying for!"

"Yet I would die for you! It is a poor love that would not die for the creature it loves! Oh, Miss Emolyn, if you have a secret that weighs upon your heart—a secret that you cannot confide to any other one on earth, *trust it to me*, dear Miss Emolyn! If you want to fly away from this place!—you did once mention to me that you did; but I was stupid then, and didn't understand, and so I jes discouraged you—but now I know better; so, if you want to fly away, I will take you away, Miss Emolyn! I have got a brother and a sister-in-law as is free and living in Pennsylwany, and I will take you to them, where you can hide and be in peace until your trouble is over, and even stay until you are of age and ready to claim your estate of Wynde Slopes, which nobody can never keep you out of, once you live to be eighteen years of age, according to your father's will! Oh, Miss Emolyn! trust in the only friend you have in this wide worle, and follow her advice!"

"Pony, do you know what my trouble really is?" muttered the girl, with pallid lips and in a scarcely audible voice.

"Yes, honey, I knows it all," answered the weeping woman.

"And can you save me from exposure and blame?" whispered Emolyn, in the same faint and frightened tone.

"Yes, honey, I can and I will, if I die for it!"

"Pony, you must not think evil of me."

"I don't, honey! You are nothing but a chile, and have no mother!"

"But for all that, you must not think evil of me, Pony! Pony, I was a married woman."

"*You* chile! *you!* La!"

"Of course I was married, Pony, else how on earth could I have been in such trouble?"

"Sure enough," said Melpomene, demurely. "Who was your husband, honey?"

"Ah! Pony, who have I ever known? Not many! Can you not guess, Pony?"

"Well, there! how dull I have been! And so it was *him?*"

"Yes, Pony, it was he! But there! hush! breathe not his name, Pony! He sleeps beneath the waves! The priest who married us is dead! My marriage certificate with all his letters to me, are gone! Once I thought they were only mislaid! Yesterday I took a thorough search, and now I know they have been stolen—maliciously stolen. I know it, but cannot prove it! Just as I know that I was married, yet cannot prove it!"

"That she-wolf has stolen them, then!" exclaimed Pony.

"Yes, I know she has; yet I cannot prove it! And, Pony, when I found that out, I made up my mind to die rather than live to meet unmerited shame! Pony, last night, when I went out, it was to buy the means of self-destruction! I did buy it, and I have it with me."

"Give it to me! Give it to me, dear Miss Emolyn!

Give it to me, and let me heave the debblish thing away!" excitedly exclaimed the woman.

"Don't be frightened, Pony. It is only laudanum. I only meant to use it when all was over, Pony! for I only wished to die myself, not to destroy the innocent one, too! Ah no! But I will not use it now—now that you promise to save me, Pony! But how will you save me?"

"I told you, honey. Run away with you to Pennsylwany, to my brother and sister-in-law."

"But how will you get the money for traveling expenses, poor Pony?"

"You have got your mother's and your father's portraits in a locket set with diamonds, Miss Emolyn?"

"Ah!" cried the girl in a tone of sharp pain.

"I know it would wring your heart to part with it, Miss Emolyn! But you need not part with the portraits, nor even with the locket. You need only give me a line to a jeweler, Miss Emolyn, and let me take the locket to him and have the diamonds picked out and sold, and bring you the money. I don't know much about the price of diamonds, but I reckon as them would bring a hundred dollars or so; leastways, enough to carry you and me to Pennsylwany."

"Pony, I will give you the locket and the order. And oh, Pony, if you can help me through this dire distress, you may save not only my life but my soul!"

"I'll do it, Miss Emolyn."

"But, oh! if my enemy should discover our plan and prevent our escape?"

"She sha'n't do it, Miss Emolyn!"

"Ah! but she has such diabolical cunning! How else should she have purloined my papers, yet seemed to have left my locks intact?"

"I dunno, Miss Emolyn, but if she gets over *me*, she

can get over Ole Nick hisself! Don't you be afeard! I am gwine to carry this matter clean through!"

"Ah, Heaven grant you may be able to do so, Pony!"

"Now, honey, you jes give me that locket, and write me that order, and then you keep your bed and stay sick to blind all their eyes, until I get the money for us to start."

"Ah, Pony, I hate deception!"

"Does you feel real, right down well, Miss 'Lyn?"

"No, Heaven knows I do not, either in mind or body!"

"Then I don't see where the 'ception comes in! Now you lay here, honey, and I will go down stairs and get ready to go to the jeweler's."

"Yes, but, Pony, hand me my little writing-desk, so that I can write the order, while you are preparing yourself, so that when you return I shall have it ready for you. Oh, Pony, now that I see a way of escape easier than death—"

"Oh, hush! hush! honey. Don't mention that awful word!" cried the woman, with a shudder, as she placed a little malachite desk on the bed before her mistress.

"Well, I won't, you foolish, old Pony! I was only going to say, that now I see an easier way of escape, I am all on fire to go! Pony! all will be well yet! Don't you think so? I haven't committed any sin to be punished for, dear Pony! If I did get married secretly, it was to my own dear playmate and lover that I have known and loved all my life! And I did not disobey any mother and father or near relation, Pony. Ah, I did not have any to disobey! My very desolation made me free to do as I liked!"

"Yes, dear chile, that it did!" said the woman, soothingly.

"Only, Pony, I was such a coward! I was as much frightened as if I had committed a great sin! That woman had so broken my spirit, Pony. And, oh, Pony, no tongue could tell! no mind could conceive what I suffered, when misfortune after misfortune, like thunder-bolt upon thunder-bolt, fell upon me! My dear guardian died; my kind old Priest Ned died; my friend, Commander Bruce, went so sea; my darling Lonny was lost on the coast of Barbary; my marriage certificate and all my papers that could have saved me from reproach were stolen; and I an utterly helpless girl, left in the hands of my cruel enemy, to meet undeserved dishonor,—dishonor worse than death!—dishonor over which my enemy would have exulted! Oh, Pony, do you wonder that I was almost mad! Do you wonder that I provided myself with the means of escape, and even triumphed in its possession? Do you wonder at anything, Pony?"

"No, Miss 'Lyn, I don't!" sighed the woman.

"But I only meant to die, when all was over, and the innocent was safe, Pony!"

"Oh, Miss 'Lyn, dear, don't talk of it!"

"No, for I feel as if all will be right now! Oh, Pony, I am so glad you thought to question me and draw this all from me, for I should never have had the courage to tell you all of myself. Now I feel so light! Just as if a great load had been lifted off my heart, or as if I had come out of a long, long, dark cave into the open sunlight! And we are going to run away, Pony! And we have a right to run away, for now that my dear guardian has passed to his eternal home, we owe no duty to anybody in this house; and no one here has any right to prevent us!—though Mrs. Warde will do it if she can!" concluded Emolyn, with a sudden shudder and a total change of aspect.

"She sha'n't, honey! Don't you be afeard! I'll get you away safe, and, in two days more, you'll be safe and sound in my brother's house in de mountains of Pennsylwany!"

"Oh, Pony! what a vision of liberty! what a vision of rapture! And to think all that safety and freedom can be obtained without any sin!—for I have a right to escape, haven't I, Pony?"

"It is more than your right to escape, it is your duty to escape, Miss 'Lyn?"

"Then all this peace and safety can be had without sin! Oh! Pony, I have been so utterly, so unspeakably miserable, that I had grown to think that there was no escape, no peace, no safety to be had, without sin, more sin and deeper misery!"

"Poor chile! poor chile! had you lost faith in the Lord's love as well as all the rest?" said Melpomene.

"I fear so! But, oh! what a change has come over me, Pony! I feel as if I was raised from death to life! I can escape without doing any wrong that would keep me from my morning and evening prayers to the Lord, or from my Sabbath's communion! I can go and rest in a home of peace and safety, and there wait for the coming of my child—Lonny's child! and then when I am eighteen years of age, I can return and claim my estate, and we will go and live at Wynde Slopes—you and I and the child! Oh, we will be so happy there, dear Pony! I shall be mistress and no one can have the right to trouble me! and you shall be nurse and only second to me. Oh, Pony, we shall be so happy! And then when Commander Bruce comes from sea, I will have courage to go to him and say:

"'I am the widow of your son. This child is his orphan. I am wealthy, as you know, but for your grand-child's sake you must acknowledge me as a

daughter and sustain me in my position!' I see it all so clearly now, Pony! Oh, I must have been very mad in my misery not to have confided in you before this, Pony!"

"I wish I had had the courage to question you before, honey, it would have saved you from many a heartache; but truth to tell, I didn't know for sartain, and I was afeared of givin' just offence."

"Pony, I know I was always so cross; I mean, not always, but since I have been in such distress."

"No wonder, honey; but here is your desk; write your order now and give it to me, and I will get the locket out of the drawer, and take both down with me, and maybe not come up again till I have done my errand; 'cause you see, honey, I must slip out whenever I get a chance to do so without being seen or questioned."

"Yes; that is best," briskly exclaimed Emolyn, as she raised herself up in bed, opened her little desk, and laid out her note-paper.

Meanwhile Pony went to the dressing-bureau, drew out the upper drawer, and took from it the small morocco case containing the diamond-set miniature locket—Emolyn's last, reserved treasure.

"Here is your order, Pony," said the girl, as she folded her note and closed her desk.

"And here's the locket, honey. Would you like to look at it before I take it away?" said Pony, as she approached the bed and opened the morocco case.

"Oh, yes! yes! hand it here! Oh! Pony, be very careful of the miniatures. Tell the jeweler to remove them very carefully from the frames," said Emolyn, as she took the locket, opened it, and pressed her lips upon "the counterfeit presentments" of her lost parents.

"Be sure I will be careful, and see that the jeweler is

careful also. But don't *you* have any care about anything, honey. I will 'range everything complete myself. I'll be back from the jewelers with the money for the diamonds, and with the miniatures all safe, before twelve o'clock *to-day*, and I'll make every 'rangement so as to take you by the arm and lead you right outen this house at two o'clock *to-night*, to take the four o'clock stage to Baltimore to-morrow morning."

"Oh, Pony! Bless you! Bless you, Pony!" gladly exclaimed Emolyn.

The faithful woman lifted and kissed the little hand held out to her, and then slipping the locket and order into her pocket, left the room, closing the door behind her.

Full of zeal for her mistress's service, Pony ran gayly down the front stairs to—fall into the clutches of Mrs. Warde at the lower landing.

"So!" said that fell woman, as she grasped the wrist of the startled and terrified nurse. "So, you wretch! You have committed a theft, and are planning an abduction?"

"Let me go! I am doing my own mistress's errand," exclaimed Pony, recovering her breath and her wits at the same time, and struggling desperately to free herself.

"You dare to resist me? Philip, come here! Tie this woman's hands behind her back while I hold her!" cried Mrs. Warde, grasping Pony around the waist with the strength of steel.

"Oh, for Heaven's sake let me go and do my young lady's errand! It is only to bring her what she wants, and she is so sick!" pleaded poor Pony, as the hall footman, compelled to obey his terrible mistress, seized and bound the hands of the captive.

"Only something she wants, is it? *I* know what she

wants! Do you suppose, you idiot, that your mistress or yourself have been unwatched for one instant, day or night, for the past month? No. Two such schemers were not to be trusted to themselves. I have overheard your whole plan, and shall of course defeat it! Not only so; but I shall effectually prevent all future conspiracies by placing you where you can hold no more communications with your shameless mistress!" said Mrs. Warde, vindictively.

"She has nothing to be ashamed of, 'less it's being kin to such as you!" retorted Pony, with much spirit.

"Search the woman! She has stolen goods upon her! I will swear it!" cried Mrs. Warde, maliciously.

The hall-footman like one ashamed of his office while compelled to obey his mistress, began to search the pockets of the now bound and helpless victim, and produced from them the morocco case, containing the locket set with diamonds.

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed Mrs. Warde, as she received them from the hands of the man. "This locket is valued at five hundred dollars! This theft will send you to the penitentiary, with hard labor, for seven years at least, and serve you right, you wretch!" exclaimed the lady, with malignant triumph.

"It belongs to my mistress! She has a right to do as she pleases with it, and she gave me a written order to sell the diamonds, for her own benefit, as you know very well, if you eavesdropped and overheard our talk, as you say you did!" retorted Pony.

"You stole these diamonds and shall be prosecuted for the theft!" exclaimed Mrs. Warde.

"I never stole nothing in all my life, so I never stole no diamonds, as my dear young mist'ess can prove for me. I wish everybody's hands was as clean as mine is! There'd be less trouble in the worle! But I 'spects

somebody, not far from here, stole my young mist'ess' papers and dockerments, which she can prove, too! but the Lord is over us all! And He'll see justice done sooner or later" said Pony, courageously.

"Take her away! Take her away! If she resists, pick her up in your arms and carry her! Lock her up in the cellar-closet, until I can send for a policeman to take her to prison," exclaimed Mrs. Warde, purple with fury.

"If you please, ma'am, here is a note, I took from her pocket," said Philip.

"It is my mistress's order to sell her locket," cried Pony.

"I don't believe it! But give me the paper! I'll take care of it," exclaimed Mrs. Warde, seizing upon the note.

Meanwhile, Philip, a huge, strong man, deeply ashamed of his commission, even while compelled to execute it, picked up the helpless captive in his arms and carried her off to the head of the cellar stairs.

"I had better see my orders executed with my own eyes, and keep the keys myself," said Mrs. Warde, with a sudden impulse, as she followed the jailer and the prisoner down the cellar steps and saw the former place the latter in the dark, damp, long disused closet of the underground cellar.

Pony, dumb with despair, not for herself but for her mistress, was securely locked in.

Mrs. Warde tried the door to see that it was secure, and then took the keys and left the dreary place, followed by her hall-footman.

But there Pony was left without bedding, food or fire.

And meanwhile how fared it with her desolate mistress? How now fared it with Emolyn Bruce?

## CHAPTER IX.

### A CATASTROPHE.

Me, miserable! which way shall I fly?
MILTON.

As soon as Pony had left her alone, Emolyn looked at the little clock upon the mantel-piece that stood just opposite the foot of her bed, and saw that the hour was only a few minutes after nine.

"Pony said she would return by twelve, noon. I have three hours to wait? Oh, what long hours they will seem! What can I do to shorten them? I have nothing to read, and nothing to sew; and I cannot go to sleep again! I will shut my eyes and lay and dream awake of the strange life before me!"

And so saying to herself, Emolyn closed her eyes upon all visible things and set her fancy free to rove over time and space.

In dreams, she saw Pony return with about two hundred dollars, received from the forced sale of diamonds worth five hundred; she went through their hasty, cautious packing, she disguised herself and her faithful servant, and waited, with locked doors, for the hour of flight, "in the dead waste and middle of the night."

In dreams she stole out of the house while all the household were buried in sleep, and attended by her maid, walked through the open fields that lay between their suburban residence and the centre of the city

where they were to take the Baltimore stage-coach, in the gray of the morning.

In imagination she found herself and her servant closely cloaked, hooded and vailed, and tucked into obscure corners of the back seat.

In imagination she took that stage-coach journey in the dawn of day to Baltimore, changed coaches there, and started for the mountains of Pennsylvania.

She pictured to herself her arrival with her maid at the cottage home of the relatives to whom Pony was to take her; she pictured their surprise and delight at seeing Pony, and their bewilderment and perplexity on seeing *her*—strange young lady.

Then, being of a most sympathetic and benevolent nature, and judging all others by herself, she pictured the warm welcome, the heart-felt kindness with which they would receive her and cherish her when once they had heard her sorrowful story, as Pony would tell it! And she thought with what deep joy she should, in time, reward their kindness by placing them forever above the reach of want.

Lying there in her day-dream she pictured herself a happy mother, with her son upon her lap; for she had persuaded herself that the child who was coming to her must be a lovely boy, who would look like Lonny. And she thought with eager impatience, of the time, less than two years thence, when she should be eighteen years of age, and when she should be mistress of her own estate and when she should take her child in her arms and carry him to Commander Bruce and say:

"See, here is the only son of your only son, whose widow I am. I have come to tell you that you are not childless in your old age."

And she pictured the incredulity and perplexity of the

lonely old man until she should have explained and proved everything to his satisfaction and delight.

And for her darling, lost Lonny's sake, she would stay with the old commander and be his daughter and little Lonny's mother as long as she should live. She would never marry, never; but when her hour of translation should come, she would be able to say to her young husband:

"I was always true to you and the son you gave me, while I lingered down there on the sad earth."

And then he, no longer a wild boy, but a strong angel, would welcome her and love her forever.

Dreaming these bright day-dreams, Emolyn was unconscious of the flight of time, until she was aroused by the opening of her door.

She started up wide awake as her eye fell upon the time-piece, whose hands pointed to one o'clock. Then glancing at the door through which she expected her servant to appear, she exclaimed briskly:

"Oh, you are an hour beyond your time, you lazy old Pony. It is after one o'clock."

But the next instant she uttered an exclamation of dismay, as her eyes met the baleful black orbs of Mrs. Warde fixed upon her.

"Ah! you were looking for some one else? But I do myself the honor of bringing you some luncheon," said the unexpected visitor, as she set down upon the stand a small tray on which was arranged a plate of stewed oysters and another of crackers.

"I—I am very sorry you took the trouble. Could not Pony have brought this up to me?" inquired Emolyn, in perplexity and alarm; for it was an unexampled event for Mrs. Warde to condescend to perform such a service for anybody, and for Emolyn it was a terrifying one.

"Hum—I have not seen your maid since early this morning," evasively replied the lady.

"Oh!" thought Emolyn to herself; "Pony has not yet returned, and is later than she expected to be, and this woman does not suspect anything; but why, then, should she take the trouble to bring my luncheon up three pair of stairs? I know she does not care anything about me. Indeed I know she hates me. I am almost afraid to taste anything she brings me."

"Come, come!" said Mrs. Warde, impatiently throwing herself down in the arm-chair beside Emolyn's bed, "come, come! are you not going to eat your oysters?"

"Oh, thank you very much; but—I would much rather not. I am not at all hungry," faltered Emolyn.

"Oh, nonsense! You must force an appetite then, and eat. Your face is as thin as a weasel's, and it is getting thinner every day! Now, I am not going to have you starve yourself into a consumption, just to spite me, and get me talked about! Come, eat a few spoonsful, at all events," said the woman, taking up the tray and placing it on the bed, immediately under the nose of the girl, and then uncovering the oysters, so that she must smell them.

The appetizing savor saluting the senses of the fasting girl, excited in her that irresistible hunger which compelled gratification. She smelled, she toyed with the spoon, she tasted.

The oysters were delicious; there could be nothing wrong with them, she argued, else would her taste at once have detected it. No, she was morbidly suspicious; her cousin, Malvina, was bad enough! Yes, bad enough to use false keys and steal her letters and papers, but not bad enough to poison her! After all, there was a wide difference between a pilferer and a poisoner.

So secretly arguing with herself, Emolyn smelled, tasted, and then ate, and enjoyed the oysters.

"Thanks, Cousin Malvina," she said, as she returned the empty bowl to the tray.

"That will do you good," said Mrs. Warde, as she took up the tray and carried it out of the room, closing the door after her.

"I wonder what she means by this show of kindness? She means something unnatural, I know that. Oh, I wish Pony would come! Half-past one, and Pony not come yet," said Emolyn, impatiently, as she glanced at the clock.

Presently she smacked her lips, and frowned, saying:

"Those oysters were very nice, and seemed all right while I was eating them, but they have certainly left a bitter taste in my mouth that I did not perceive until all the other tastes had gone. But, there, I am fanciful and bilious. I won't think such dreadful thoughts. Oh, how I wish Pony would come! What *can* delay her?"

Another half-hour crept slowly by, and Emolyn became very restless from other causes than mere impatience.

"There *was* something in the oysters!" she exclaimed, as she turned upon her bed. "Oh, but I will not think it! It is the last day in April now, and the oyster season is over, and they in themselves are likely enough to make one ill, without any other cause. Oh, how I wish Pony would come. It is two o'clock, and she promised to be here at twelve. Two hours behind her time. What can have happened to her?"

Another hour passed slowly by, while Emolyn's illness increased. She could no longer lie on her bed, but walked the floor with unsteady steps; now dropping upon the nearest chair or sofa, and now starting

up and staggering wildly about the room, sometimes exclaiming:

"Oh, I am poisoned! I know that I am poisoned!" And then again:

"Ah, how wickedly suspicious I am! The unseasonable oysters have made me ill, nothing else. Oh, how I wish Pony would come! Three o'clock! Good heaven! Three o'clock! She went away at nine, and promised to be back at twelve, and now it is three. She stays just twice as long as she said she would. Oh, Pony! Pony! come to me! I am ill almost to death!" So saying she threw herself upon the bed.

In a few moments she sprang up, exclaiming:

"I must have help!" And she flew to the door to call assistance; but, to her consternation, she found it locked on the outer side.

"Oh, I see it all, now," she wailed in a voice of despair. "I see it now! I am poisoned and locked in here to die without help. I will not so die! I will call from the windows! I will shout from the windows! And the people will see and hear me from the street, and they will fetch the police to come in and see what is the matter!"

Acting upon this desperate impulse, Emôlyn flew to the front windows to raise them and throw open the blinds; but, to her astonishment and dismay, she found them screwed down fast.

"This has been done since yesterday. Some one has entered my room during my absence and Pony's, and has done this. Oh, I am entrapped! I am entrapped by a demon. Oh, Pony! why don't you come back! You would find a way to enter into my room, or you would fetch those who would force an entrance. Oh, Pony! Pony! my only friend, come back to poor Emolyn. I am betrayed, and I am poisoned. I am ill and dying,

Pony! Oh, treachery! treachery! treachery!" So wailing, the unfortunate girl lost strength and consciousness, and fell down in a swoon—in a swoon from which anguish was soon to arouse her.

In the meanwhile, Mrs. Warde, on leaving Emolyn's chamber, had retired to her own room, where she sat waiting an expected visitor.

About two o'clock, the man Philip came to her, with a message that Mrs. Whitlock, the nurse, wished to speak with her.

"Tell her to come up. She knows the way," answered the lady.

The man withdrew, and was soon succeeded by the nurse, who entered with a deep courtesy.

"Well, Whitlock, sit down and then tell me what has brought you here," said the lady.

"Well, ma'am," returned the nurse, dropping into a low seat and panting, "you know I told you as I was sure, unless things could be brought to a crisis within twenty-four hours I could't help you, if it was to save my life. I told you that this morning, didn't I, ma'am?"

"Yes, and I have acted on your advice."

"Well, now I tell you more, ma'am. Ef this here affair can't be finished up to-night, it can never be done; it would be impossible to make things hit, ma'am. I say it most respectful, but I say it most positive. It would be impossible to make things hit, ma'am!"

"Do not fear. The work is commenced. Did I not tell you I had acted on your advice? I have administered the drug you left, and it has already begun to take effect. Mind! the doors will be closed to-night as usual at ten o'clock. The servants will all be in the kitchen, or in their sleeping apartments over the

kitchen, in the back building of this house. I shall then close and bolt the doors communicating between the front and back parts (though I must open them again before daylight, to avoid exciting comment). Thus we shall have the whole house to ourselves."

"But the young lady's maid, ma'am? Muley, or whatever her name is! She sleeps in the room next her lady, don't she?"

"You mean Pony? No, she does not sleep in the house now. There will be no one in the house except you, myself, and—our patient. I will have every light put out and every door locked by ten o'clock to-night. I will then take up my position at the front parlor window and watch for you. You must cough loudly; then I will open the door and let you in."

"Yes, ma'am. I will remember to cough."

"Now what time will you come?"

"Ah! dear ma'am, I couldn't tell you to the hour. It depends on what happens, you know, ma'am. But some time between this and morning."

"I hope it will not be too near the morning. That would be too dangerous, and might be fatal," said Mrs. Warde, uneasily.

"I don't think it will be too near morning, ma'am. Indeed, for the matter of that, it is likely to be too near this evening; but I shall do the very best I can," replied the woman.

"Very well. Remember that, in any case, for your assistance in this matter, you receive a perfect immunity from prosecution for that offence of which we know, and for which, if you were arraigned, you would be convicted and sent to prison for a term of years."

"Oh, I know that, ma'am. I know it! Don't I think of it all day long? Don't I wake up in the night to think of it?"

"Think of it no longer since you assist me in this matter, however it may turn out, you will be free from danger. And remember, also, that if our enterprise should be successful, in one month from to-day—namely, on the first of June—you will receive from my hands the sum of five hundred dollars."

"Yes, ma'am," respectfully replied the woman. "But not for that, oh, not for that, would I engage in this black business. Only to save myself from a prison and my poor name from disgrace," she added to herself.

"Why do you mutter and look so grave? Do you suppose I will not keep my promise?" tartly demanded Mrs. Warde.

"No, ma'am—I know that you will do what you say; but I am overstaying my time, and I fear I shall be missed. Besides, it is perilous to leave my patient even for half an hour. Let me say good-night to you ma'am."

"Good-night, until I see you again. Remember the signal. I shall be on the watch."

"I shall remember, ma'am," said the woman, as she left the room.

* * * * *

That night, in the old Manor Hall of Green Point while all the household, except two, were buried in sleep, "in the dead of night," a deed was done that has no name in all the catalogue of crime.

## CHAPTER X.

### RUIN.

A deed without a name.—SHAKESPEARE.

The next morning was the first of May—a general holiday—the joyous May-day, anticipated with delight by all the young people of the city.

The sun arose in cloudless splendor, lighting up the clear, light blue sky, the bright river, the green fields and verdant woods. The air was fragrant with the perfume of wild flowers, and musical with the songs of free, glad birds.

All nature breathed of life, and light, and joy! It was the very jubilee of the year!

From an early hour troops of children might have been seen passing in front of the mansion in Green Point on their way to the bridge, to cross the river and go "Maying" in the wild woods on the opposite bank.

Their merry tattle and ringing laughter might have awakened sounder sleepers than those of Green Point.

Within that house of sin and doom, the unsuspicious servants were early astir.

Philip, the man-servant, went as usual to open all the doors and windows to let in the morning sunshine

and fresh air ; and then to dust the furniture and kindle the light wood fires that the chilly dawn of early morning rendered pleasant as well as prudent.

But in all his going to and fro, Philip saw no signs of anything unusual about the premises.

In the kitchen, the housekeeper and cook, old Aunt Monica, was busy over her fire, baking rolls and broiling spring chickens, while Phillis, her assistant, ground the coffee.

A shouting troop of children, passing by, attracted her attention.

"What a noise dem young ones does make, to be sure ! Minds me so of last May-day was a year, when Miss Emolyn and Marse Lonny went Maying over in de woods across de river, and took Melpony with 'em ! Ah ! my Lord ! How many changes since dem happy, derry-down-dilly days ! Dem was days, gal ! Ole master was alive den and keeping up high-jim-be-lung all day and all night with his merry 'panions, as why not ? Why shouldn't he 'joy hisse'f with his friends ? 'Deed I never 'jected to it myself, dough I had all de cooking to do, 'cept when a upstart Frenchman was called in to dress the frogs and snails and sich like riptyles as no 'spectable cook would tetch, and no 'spectable, 'sponsible ge'man eat. Ole marse wouldn't, that I tell you all good. He only had 'em served up for some of his foreign 'panions and wisiters. Ah, dem was the days, gal, ole marster 'joyed his life ! Sich breakfas' parties and dinner parties and oyster suppers and champagne lunches ! Whip your horses ! Don't talk ! And Miss Emolyn persiding with as much grace and diggerty as if she was a young princess."

"I nebber seed nuffin like dat," answered the jet-black negress Phillis.

"No, I reckon not ! How should you ? You come

from camp, 'long of old mist'ess, Mrs. Warde. And when she come, in her deep mourning, all was changed. Not as I think she cared for him one bit, mind you, but oh, law! the blackest bombazine and the deepest crape. It was like forty funerals had come into de house all at wunst. No more derry-down-dilly days! No more high-jim-be-lung nights! No more champagne lunches! No more oyster suppers! Poor old marse hardly dared to smoke a pipe, or play a rubber of whist with an ole croney, till he lost all his gay sperrits, and looked jes for all de worle like a crippled crow out in de rain. And she a train-banding Miss Emolyn to that degree de gal almos' lost her lunacies. And eberything that gloomy in the house till I did wish in my soul as it was the fashion to burn some widows on a pile of light wood with the bodies of their husbands, like they do in them there heathen countries out yonder!"

"Eh? Where does dey do dat?" inquired Phillis rolling the whites of her eyes in astonishment.

"You tend to grinding your coffee, and don't ask questions. Your mist'ess brought bad luck enough into this house. It killed ole marster. I jes believe it did! He never was the same man after she come home! Dere go de chillern again! Ah, Lord! Well I 'member last year, when Marse Lonny Bruce come in a shouting and carried off Miss Emolyn and Melpony across the river. And, oh, the loads and loads of wild Honeysuckle and eglantine they brought home and trimmed ole marse's room with. And, now, where is dey all? Ole marse mouldering in de churchyard. Young Marse Lonny at the bottom of the briny waves. Miss Emolyn dying of some inward illness. Even poor Melpony come to trouble, being 'cused o' stealing, which she nebber did, and locked up for it. There's the madam's bell! Run, Phillis! I'll finish grinding the coffee."

The black girl immediately dropped her first office of kitchen scullion by taking off her coarse apron and washing her hands, and she assumed her more agreeable duties as lady's maid by putting on a clean, white muslin apron, collar and cuffs, and running to answer her mistress's bell.

For, since the death of Captain Wyndeworth, the establishment at Green Point had been cut down to suit the reduced income of the house, and it now consisted of only four servants—the cook, the housemaid, the man servant, and Emolyn's attendant.

Old Monica prepared her coffee, and had breakfast ready to serve at a minute's notice, for she knew that Mrs. Ward was never long at her morning toilet.

"Now, I wonder who is going to take that poor child's, Miss Emolyn's, breakfast up to her? I know ole mist'ess 'tended to her yesterday; but, like as not, she'll neglect to look arter her to-day; and it's almost as much as my life's worth to take it on myself to look arter her. 'Deed it is almost as much as any servant's life is worth to wary one single hair's breadth outen de line ob duty she's described for dem, dere."

Old Monica's soliloquy was interrupted by the entrance of Philip, who came in hurriedly, and said:

"The madam has ordered breakfast to be put on the table at wunst. So hurry up, Aunt Monica!"

"Who's yer talkin' to? Breakfas' is ready! Put it on your tray and sarve it immediate."

The huge giant meekly obeyed the little old woman, and with his well-laden tray went up to the dining-room—that room which had been the scene of so many feasts in the days of her father, and which Mrs. Warde still chose to use in preference to a smaller one, on account of its fine outlook upon the river and the wooded hills beyond.

Philip had scarcely arranged the substantial breakfast upon the table, when Mrs. Warde entered the room.

She wore a dark gray cashmere wrapper, trimmed with black silk facings, and confined around her waist by a black silk cord and tassels, and above her raven hair she wore a little muslin breakfast cap, trimmed with gray and black ribbon. She looked as handsome and as haughty as ever; but her face was pale and drawn, and her manner absent and nervous from some secret source of trouble and anxiety, that she could not altogether conceal even from her unsuspicious servant.

She sat down at the table and poured out a cup of coffee, which she drank eagerly without cream or sugar.

When her waiter offered her the plate of rolls, she took one, broke it and buttered it, but let it lay untasted.

When he offered her the dish of broiled chickens, she took half a small one and put it on her plate, and made a feint of eating a little.

But presently she pushed away her breakfast, leaned back in her chair and said:

"Philip, go and tell Monica to come here."

The man bowed and left the room, and in a few moments returned, accompanied by the cook.

"Monica," began the lady, "you are aware, I suppose, that Melpomene is no longer in attendance upon her mistress. I wish you, therefore, to take Melpomene's place this morning, and indeed until I can provide a substitute, which I hope to do during the day."

"Yes, ma'am, willingly will I wait on Miss Emolyn. But please, ma'am, what is the matter with poor Miss Emolyn? She did look like death when I see her the last time," Monica ventured to say.

"I don't know what is the matter with her. But for the girl's stubborn refusal to see a physician, I should have called in one long ago. However, I shall put it off no longer. I shall have a doctor to see her to-day," said Mrs. Warde, with so much more than her usual condescension in speaking to her servants that poor old Monica was surprised into saying :

"Indeed, I hope you will, ma'am, for the child looks like one at the point of death."

"There—that will do. Now just arrange some breakfast upon a tray for Miss Wyndeworth and take it up to her at once," said Mrs. Warde, by way of checking the old woman's continued freedom of speech, as she herself arose from the table and went up to her room.

She did not there settle herself to any occupation, but merely took a book in her hand as a pretence and sat down near the door, which she left open. She listened and watched with much more anxiety than the slight occasion of carrying a little breakfast up to a sick girl would seem to warrant.

Presently she heard old Monica coming slowly up the stairs—slowly as her age compelled her to move.

She paused before the open door and exhibited a dainty little repast arranged upon a neat tray and covered with a snow-white napkin.

"Don't you think she might relish this, ma'am?" she said, raising the edge of the napkin.

"I hope so ; you had better go and see," replied the lady.

Old Monica turned to climb the second flight of stairs, while Mrs. Warde looked after her, flushing and paling, staring and trembling as if she momentarily expected the explosion of a bomb-shell or the falling of a thunder bolt.

She listened acutely until she heard old Monica rap

discreetly at Emolyn's door, and, without waiting for an answer, turn the knob of the latch and go in.

There was a pause of about a minute that seemed an hour to the listening lady, who held her breath in suspense.

And then came a cry of horror that rang through and through the house.

Mrs. Warde started up and rushed into the passage. It was her cue to do so.

Philip and Phillis, terrified by that awful cry, ran up from the dining-room to see what had happened.

And old Monica, aghast with horror, came running down from Emolyn's chamber.

The four met in a moment at the foot of the stairs, and gazed into each other's faces.

"In the name of heaven, what is the matter?" gasped Mrs. Warde, who was trembling as with a chill.

"Oh, mist'ess, mist'ess! Miss Emolyn! Miss Emolyn!" cried Monica, crazed with terror.

"What of her? What is the matter with her? Can't you speak, woman?" panted the pale Malvina Warde.

"Oh, mist'ess! Oh, mist'ess! Come see! Come see! I can't speak it! No, I can't!" gasped the woman.

"Follow me, all of you," said Mrs. Warde, in a hollow voice, as she laid her hand on the balustrades, and supporting herself by them, toiled slowly and painfully up the stairs.

The woman seemed, indeed, not like one who expected and feared to behold a terrible catastrophe, but like one who was already blasted by some vision of horror.

The frightened and wondering servants went close behind her until she entered the half-darkened chamber of Emolyn.

There they paused discreetly at the door.

The lady slowly crossed the gloomy chamber; but when she reached the bedside she threw up her hands and uttered a half-suppressed shriek. Then turning to the group at the door, she cried out:

"Come no nearer, Philip! Hasten for a doctor! Phillis, go fetch me hartshorn! Monica, here!"

The two younger servants hurried away on their errands, and the elder one closed the door and mournfully joined her mistress at the bedside.

Both stood silent and horrified, gazing upon the picture before them. It was a picture to appall the stoutest heart, to melt the hardest.

There on the fore part of the bed, with her arms thrown over her head, her face turned up, white and rigid, with open eyes, and lips like one who had died unattended and alone, lay the form of Emolyn Bruce, while in the shadows behind her, near the wall, might be dimly seen the tiny, dead body of a young infant.

Monica was the first to speak.

"Oh, mist'ess! Oh, mist'ess! Oh, what a sight for our eyes to behold! So this was what was the trouble! Oh, if a angel from Heaven had told me, I wouldn't a believed it! No, I wouldn't! Oh, I's glad now as old marse is dead and gone, 'fore ever he lived to see this sorrow! I wish I had been dead and gone too, 'fore ever I live to see this day! Oh, mist'ess, however in the world could this happen, and she so good?"

Mrs. Warde shook her head, and made no reply.

Monica wrung her withered old hands, and wept aloud, crying:

"Oh, mist'ess! look at her! Look at her, how pitiful it is! To die here all alone in her trouble, without a single friend to close her eyes! But I suppose things being as they is, it was better for her to die anyways."

"Much better," grimly replied Mrs. Warde.

Monica's sobs and tears choked her utterance for a while, and then, with a most piteous inconsistency, she cried out :

"Oh, can't nothing be done? Ain't there no hope? Is she quite dead? Oh, maybe she ain't! Oh, maybe there may be a little life left in her yet! Oh, mist'ess don't let us give her up so easy! Let me rub her hard and try and fetch her too! I'se very strong yet!"

And so saying, Monica hastily rolled up her sleeves and prepared for work.

"Don't touch her on your life? This is a case for the coroner, you idiot!" quickly exclaimed Mrs. Warde.

At that moment Phillis returned to the room, bringing a bottle of hartshorn.

Mrs. Warde met her at the door, took the bottle, and sent her away, closing the door behind her.

Then Mrs. Warde threw herself into an easy-chair and strongly inhaled the ammonia.

"Oh mist'ess, for the good Lord's sake, let me put some hartshorn to her nose! There can't be no harm in that; for I won't so much as tetch her; and then maybe there won't be no call for no crowner; for 'deed I ain't so sure she's dead, mist'ess. She do look awful ghastly, but not like dead, now I come to look at her good! Oh! mist'ess, please give me de hartshorn, and let me see if I can't 'vive her," pleaded old Monica.

"Come away from that bed this instant! I tell you this may be a case for a coroner's inquest; therefore nothing must be disturbed until the arrival of the physician," said Mrs. Warde, peremptorily.

"But, oh, mist'ess, must we let her die if there should be a little life left in her?" earnestly argued the old woman.

"The doctor will be here in a few moments—and

here he is now!" said Mrs. Warde, as creaking footsteps were heard upon the stairs.

She went and opened the door herself, and stood face to face with the family physician, who was there, attended by the footman.

"Oh, Doctor Willet, come in. Such a horrible discovery! Such an awful shock! It is a wonder my hair has not turned white within the last hour," exclaimed Mrs. Warde as she admitted the physician, and closed the door upon the retreating footman.

"I am very sorry, madam, if anything so serious has occurred. Your servant could tell me nothing but that some sudden illness, or accident, had happened to Miss Wyndeworth," replied the doctor, sympathetically.

"Ah, Doctor! such accidents as overwhelm a family with humiliation! Come here! Come here, and look! This picture tells its own sad story!" said Mrs. Warde, leading the way to the bedside.

Leaving the doctor there, she went and threw herself into the easy-chair, and buried her face in her handkerchief.

"Lord, bless my soul! this is very bad, very bad indeed!" exclaimed the doctor, shocked out of his professional reticence, as he saw the sad picture before him. "How did this happen?"

"Ah, I do not know, Doctor! It seems that no one knows! She kept her secret so well that I left her yesterday in this room, without the slightest suspicion of the truth, and—I found her this morning as you see! Nothing has been disturbed; but there lies an empty bottle, labeled laudanum, by her pillow! I much fear that the unhappy girl has committed suicide by taking laudanum," said Mrs. Warde, again burying her face in her handkerchief.

"The poor girl is not dead, but in an opium sleep that

must end in death if she is not aroused. Even to arouse her, however, will be dangerous in her present condition," said the doctor.

"And the babe? the babe?" exclaimed the lady.

The doctor raised the tiny little form in his hands and looked at it before he replied:

"The child is quite dead."

"A natural death, Doctor? Oh, tell me the truth! Believe me, I can bear it!" said Mrs. Warde.

"No, not a natural death. The child has been strangled," sadly and solemnly replied the doctor.

"Oh, horror! horror! Then if the miserable mother should live, she will be liable to prosecution for the murder of her child!" exclaimed Mrs. Warde, clasping her hands with a distracted air.

"Yes," replied the doctor. "She must be tried, if she should live."

## CHAPTER XI.

### AN AWAKENING TO DESPAIR.

On horror's head horrors accumulate!

THOMPSON.

"'She must be tried for her life if she live.' Oh, Doctor! would it not be better to let her die?" exclaimed Mrs. Warde, in well-acted desperation.

"Madam," replied the physician, in sorrowful surprise, "do you not know, then, that it is our bounden duty to save life, if we can, under *all* circumstances, even when life would be more bitter than death?"

"Oh, I know that! Only the grief and horror of the situation make me forget everything else."

"That is quite natural, my dear lady; but I at least should keep my old head steady enough to remember all that is necessary to be done; though, indeed, in my fifty years of medical practice, I have never met with a case so painful; and I have seen much sorrow! Madam, all that is left us now is the performance of our duty."

Even while the doctor spoke, he was using such gentle means as were readiest at hand to awaken, without startling, the comatose girl; bathing her face from a bowl of cold water silently presented by Monica, and occasionally applying to her nostrils the vial of sal-volatile that had been offered by Mrs. Warde, meanwhile the servant briskly rubbed one of the cold hands, and the mistress smartly smacked the palm of the other.

"Oh, sir! Oh, Marse Doctor. See! She *is* waking up, is she not?" earnestly inquired Monica, who had never taken her tearful eyes from the face of her young mistress.

"Yes," said the doctor, gravely, "she is waking up partially."

Then the three anxious watchers bent over Emolyn who had opened her dull, half-closed eyes, and was looking stupidly straight before her.

"Do you know me, my child?" inquired the doctor, trying to catch her glance.

But he failed to elicit any response by word or look.

"Do you know me, Emolyn?" severely demanded Mrs. Warde.

The sharpness of the tone caused the girl to look at the speaker, but she made no answer.

"Oh, honey, I know you knows *me*, your poor ole

Aunt Moniky, as her heart is broke for you this minute. You knows me, honey, don't you?" pleaded the old woman.

"Yes," sighed Emolyn, wearily, as she closed her eyes and resigned herself to sleep once more.

"We must keep her awake now," said the doctor.

And he rapidly gave his orders, sending Mrs. Warde in one direction and Monica in another, for the articles he needed to antidote the opium.

By the united efforts of the three, the unhappy girl was gradually but fully awakened, though she was still sufficiently under the influence of the opium to seem unnaturally calm and collected, in her terrible circumstances. At least, so thought those who looked on. She only turned her face away from the doctor, and shuddered whenever Mrs. Warde approached her.

"I think we had better leave her for the present to be watched by the colored woman. She seems to bear her presence better than ours. Come, my dear Mrs. Warde, let us go farther away. There is much painful business to be done here, you know," whispered the doctor in a very low voice, as he drew the lady from the bedside to the farthest front window.

"Should not the body of that unfortunate babe be prepared for burial?" inquired Mrs. Warde.

"There must be an inquest first; I am grieved to have this to say, but it is indispensable, you know."

"Yes, I know."

"The body, however, may be removed at once from its present position," said the doctor, as he beckoned old Monica to approach them.

She came at once.

"My good woman, as soon as you get a chance, take up that little corpse and bring it here and lay it on a pillow on this table. But do not disturb the mother by

letting her see what you are doing. Do you understand?" inquired the doctor in a low tone.

The old creature nodded intelligently, and returned to her post, where she watched for the opportunity of removing the babe.

But Emolyn, though preternaturally indifferent to her condition, was wide awake and very watchful.

When Monica returned to her bedside she made a sign that the old woman should stoop down to her; and when her wish was complied with she whispered:

"*Are they gone?*"

"Is who gone, honey?" inquired old Monica, uncertain whether Emolyn was in her right senses, or knew what she was talking about.

"Mrs. Warde and the doctor. Are they gone?"

"Yes, honey, they's gone."

"*Hush!* Have they left the room?"

"Yes, honey, sure!" promptly replied Monica, who would have lied her soul to perdition to have soothed her unhappy young lady.

"Down stairs?"

"Yes, honey, down stairs."

"Monica, where is Pony?"

The old woman paused a moment. She had no lie ready, and she was slow of invention; but at length a bright idea struck her, and she answered:

"Oh, honey, Melpony sprained her ankle and can't get upstairs. So I has got to wait on you in her place."

"Pony has sprained her ankle! Oh, that was the reason why she couldn't come back to me! And she had no one to whom she could confide a message! That was the cause of all the trouble. Poor Pony! And, oh, poor me! Monica."

"What is it, honey?"

"Do you know that I have a little baby?"

"Yes, honey, I knows all about it; but don't you fret."

"Monica! do *they* know it?"

"Yes, honey; but please don't 'sturb yourself."

"Ah me! Ah me! Monica, I never committed any sin."

"I don't believe you ever did, honey."

"But *they* will believe it, Monica! *They* will believe it! Oh, what will become of me? How can I face anybody? Oh, if Pony had not hurt herself, she would have taken me far, far away, where no one would have reproached me! where I could have lived and reared my child in peace until I could have proved to every one that I had not sinned. But it is too late now—too late! Oh, why could I not have died? Why do I still live? Oh, Monica, I did not take enough to kill me! I didn't take enough, though I took all that was in the bottle!"

"Oh, hush, hush, honey! You don't know what you's taking about," answered the old nurse, weeping.

"Oh, yes, I do, Monica! I know too well. Where is my baby, Monica? I do not see it. I wrapped it in a shawl and laid it by my side, and patted it until it went to sleep. Then I took the laudanum and went to sleep too; but I never expected to wake again; and to think I have waked before the baby! Isn't it strange it sleeps so long?"

"Little young babies is just like little young kittens, honey. You know they sleeps most of the time," replied Monica, adding within herself this comment:

"I knowed she couldn't a knowed what she was doing when she 'stroyed the life of her own child! I knowed afore, and now I'm convinced of it."

"Well, any way, they can't kill me for being the mother of my baby; and at last, I can take it

home to my own house, at Wynde Slopes, and live there in peace, if not in happiness," sighed Emolyn, with a sort of dreary and desperate resignation, as she closed her eyes, covering them with her hands.

Mrs. Warde, from her covert in the window, signed to Monica that now was her chance to withdraw the child.

Monica stooped cautiously over Emolyn, and lifted the little body from its place near the wall, and was in the act of removing it, when the eyes of the sensitive mother opened, and she quickly inquired :

"What are you doing with my baby, Monica ?"

"Only taking it away to tend to it, honey. You know babies 'quire 'tention," replied the woman, trembling at the fear of discovery.

"But it is not awake ! It is asleep ! Put it down here, Monica ! I insist upon it !" she said, rising on her elbow, and, for the first time, getting sight of the little distorted corpse.

"Oh ! what is that ? What is the matter with my baby ? Why does the little head hang so helplessly ?" she cried, taking the tiny body from the paralyzed hands of the frightened nurse and pressing it to her bosom.

"Oh ! it is cold ! It is stiff ! It is dead ! dead !" she gasped, laying the little form on the counterpane under her eyes, and staring at it, while she continued to cry :

"Oh ! look at its poor, little neck, Monica ! look ! look! Oh ! who has done this cruel, cruel thing ? This wicked, wicked deed ? It was alive and well when I wrapped it in my shawl and patted it to sleep. And now look at it ! Oh, look ! Look at its poor little neck! I wouldn't have minded it so very much if it had died of its own self ! But *so!* Oh, the pity of it ! Oh, Monica, why don't you tell me who did this fiendish deed !"

"Oh, my dear young lady, if I was bound to the

stake and thumb-screwed, I couldn't tell you, 'cause woe is me! I don't know. I never saw the poor, little thing until a little while ago, when it was lying just where I took it from this minute."

"Oh, the pity! the pity of it! Who could have had the hard heart to hurt such a poor, little, harmless, helpless creature as this?" she moaned, taking the tiny hands and pressing them to her lips, while her tears fell fast upon the little, cold, unconscious face.

"Should not this be stopped?" whispered Mrs. Warde to the doctor.

"Not yet. The paroxysm will pass away, and she will be the better for it," he replied.

"Paroxysm! Can you not see that this is acting?"

"No, I do not think it is acting. It may be remorse."

"Remorse may cause her tears and lamentations, but not her words. They are dictated by policy, since they accuse some other hand than her own of the death of her child," said Mrs. Warde, with malignant persistency.

"She may not really be conscious of having injured it. She may have done the fatal deed during a temporary fit of insanity," pleaded the doctor.

"I wish I could think so. I wish I could find insanity, or any other palliation, for such a heinous crime," said Mrs. Warde. "But, Doctor, are we not culpably neglecting a most peremptory duty? Should not the coroner be notified?" she inquired, with an ill-concealed, malignant haste to precipitate the catastrophe of Emolyn's destruction.

"Presently. There is time enough. I will hold myself responsible for the performance of that painful duty; but let the poor girl have time to make her moan over her child—or her crime—if you will call it so," said the doctor, sorrowfully.

No more words passed between them at the time; but both from their covert listened to the lamentations of the poor young mother, over the dead body of the babe, for Emolyn was still weeping bitterly and repeating, with endless repetitions, as mourners will, the burden of her woe.

At length, however, the passion of grief exhausted itself for the time being and she resigned the tiny corpse to Monica, and lay back upon her pillow, calm from prostration.

Then Monica brought the little body and laid it on a pillow, and placed it on the top of a table and covered it over with a sheet.

"Now, then," said the doctor, "I will go and notify the coroner; but I hope they will not insist on holding the inquest in this room," he added in a whisper, as he took up his hat, bowed to the lady, and silently left the apartment.

Mrs. Warde, with a sign to Monica to keep upon her watch, quietly followed the doctor's example, and stole away from the scene of so much distress, to the refuge of her own chamber.

Later in the day, the coroner, accompanied by the family physician, arrived at Green Point.

They went up stairs and entered the chamber so silently as not to disturb its occupant, who lay with her face turned to the wall, not asleep, but in the collapse of sorrow, the lethargy of despair.

The doctor turned down the sheet, and showed the dead infant, with a black and blue circle around the tender throat.

Both looked on pityingly for a moment, and then gazed into each other's faces and sadly shook their heads.

Then the doctor covered the pathetic form, and they

both left the room as quietly as they had entered it.

After closing the door behind them, Dr. Willet turned to the coroner and said :

"Mr. Wright, I am constrained to tell you that the inquest cannot take place in that chamber without imminent peril to my patient's life."

"Sir," said the coroner, who was a stern man, "can the inquest take place anywhere without imminent peril to your patient's life? Infanticide is a capital crime, punishable by death, as it should be. Who could look at that pitiable little victim and not assent to the justice of the law?"

"Do you think that any mother could destroy her own child, unless she were insane and morally irresponsible?" gravely, rebukingly inquired the doctor.

"Sir, I have been coroner here for fifteen years, and have sent more than one case of this kind up to the grand jury. But all this is premature. Now, although it would be the regular process to hold the inquest on the body in the room where the child met its death, yet if you think the disturbance would be dangerous to your patient in her present condition, of course the body can be removed to some room below stairs, and the inquest may be held there," concluded the coroner, as they reached the ground-floor of the house.

The drawing-room was finally selected as the scene of the investigation.

The little corpse was brought down quietly to that place, and laid upon a table standing in the middle of the floor,

A jury was summoned and sworn, and witnesses were called.

There were but two persons capable of giving legal evidence in this case—Mrs. Warde and Doctor Willet.

The two others—the nurse, Melpomene, and the housekeeper, Monica, who could have thrown more or less light upon the subject—were excluded upon the score of color; for those were the days, not so far away, when negroes could not give lawful testimony in the cases of white persons.

The first witness called was Malvina Wyndeworth Warde, who, being duly sworn, testified that on the afternoon of the preceding day, she had left her late father's ward, Emolyn Wyndeworth, slightly indisposed in bed, in her chamber; that she had not seen her since until the forenoon of the present day, when she was startled by the sudden outcries of the servant-woman, Monica, who begged her to come to Miss Emolyn's room; that she had hastened thither and discovered what she had at first supposed to be the dead bodies of the woman and child; that, without allowing them to be touched, she had immediately sent for the family physician, Doctor Willet, who promptly arrived upon the scene.

Being here asked by a juror whether she had possessed any knowledge of her ward's state of health or condition previous to the discovery of the morning, she answered that she had not; that so well had the girl guarded her secret that she had no knowledge of it.

The next witness called was Doctor Willet, who testified that he had been summoned to the house by Mrs. Warde; that he had found the child before them quite dead from strangulation; the mother in a deep opium sleep resembling death; that he had succeeded in rousing the mother, who, on coming to herself exhibited great distress on discovering the death of her child.

The doctor was permitted to retire without cross-examination.

The jury deliberated for a few moments, and then

came to a unanimous decision and rendered their verdict:

That the child came to her death by strangulation at the hands of her mother, Emolyn Wyndeworth.

A warrant was immediately made out for the arrest of the accused.

## CHAPTER XII.

### IN CUSTODY.

She? what she answered? As I live,
She never thought of such a thing
As answer possible to give!
What says the body, when they spring
Some monstrous torture-engine's whole
Force upon it? No more says the soul!

ROBERT BROWNING.

When these facts became known to the household, the greatest consternation prevailed among them.

The servants looked at each other's faces in dumb dismay. That their little mistress, Emolyn Wyndeworth, a mere child herself should be the mother of a child was in itself sufficiently amazing; but that she should be charged with murder was simply incomprehensible!

An ominous silence fell upon them. Instead of chattering over this calamity as they might have done over any less misfortune, they went mutely about their business, seeming to wonder who might next unexpectedly fall under the ban of the law, and for what!

Mrs. Warde in the privacy of her own chamber, smiled grimly to herself.

"It is not exactly what I meant," she muttered, in-

wardly; "not exactly what I meant, but it will do. I thought the contents of that bottle of laudanum, procured by herself, must have ended all her earthly woes. It has not, but this will do as well; for if the law does not take her life, terror will kill her! She can never survive the fright of her arrest or the horror of her trial. Emolyn Wyndeworth will die, and I shall be mistress of Wynde Slopes! Yet it is very, very awful! much more so than anything I could have planned, or would have planned, even to secure Wynde Slope! Bah! I will not think of it! After all, it was fate, not I, that arranged this catastrophe," she concluded, with a shudder, as she went to a small cabinet and drew forth a bottle of cegniac and a wine-glass, filled the latter with brandy, and drank it off.

"Yes, it is worse than I could have foreseen!" she said again. And then she poured out another glass of brandy, and drank that.

"After all, what is the use of thinking?" she asked herself; "the matter has gone beyond my control. At least, I could not save her without sacrificing my own honor and liberty! No, it is not likely that I would do that to save mine enemy's life! though it was the very cowardice of taking life that led me to plan as I did! And now to think!—But I will not think. 'What is past remedy is past regret.'"

And here the woman poured out a third glass of brandy and drank it.

Then she tottered to the chamber door and locked it, tottered back to her bed, threw herself down and forgot the pangs of conscience in a deep sleep.

Meanwhile, Dr. Willet, on hearing the verdict of the coroner's jury, hastened to the magistrate by whom the warrant for Emolyn Wyndeworth's arrest was being made out, and rather abruptly demanded;

"I suppose, sir, you will admit that the law does not require that this unhappy girl, Emolyn Wyndeworth, should suffer death without a trial?"

The magistrate looked up from his deep preoccupation, and rubbed his forehead with a puzzled air as he gazed at the speaker.

Dr. Willet repeated his question.

"I don't know what you mean! Suffer death without a trial? Surely that is not what you say?" said the dull but honest Peter Corbin, still staring at the physician.

"Yes, sir, *that* is just what I say, and *this* is just what I mean—Emolyn Wyndeworth is my patient. She is now lying in a very critical condition. Any excitement would be very dangerous to her life. The shock of an arrest would cause her death. That is my opinion, as her medical attendant."

"Well, Doctor, you must give me that opinion in writing and under oath. And then I will detail two officers to hold her in custody, by watching her doors, until she can be safely brought away."

"Thanks, that will do," answered Dr. Willet, who then immediately took pen and ink, wrote out his medical certificate with his own hand, signed and proved it, and gave it into the keeping of the magistrate.

Two police officers—one of them bearing the warrant for Emolyn Wyndeworth's arrest, with instructions to hold it until she should be in a condition to appear before the magistrate and then to execute it,—were detailed to go to Green Point and watch the doors of the accused.

Dr. Willet went hurriedly in advance to prepare the inmates of the house for their arrival.

He asked for Mrs. Warde, but was told that that lady was fast asleep in her room, and could not be disturbed

So then he went down himself to open the doors to the officers of the law, and to conduct them up stairs.

"It is necessary for me to see my prisoner," said the officer who bore the warrant, and who was a very respectable-looking, middle-aged man, with gray hair.

"You may do so. She is sleeping now, and you can enter her room and view, without disturbing her," answered the doctor, who, on arriving at the chamber door, silently opened it and went in the room, signing the officers to follow him.

They all went silently up to the bed, where the sleeper was still watched by old Monica, who sat half stupefied on the easy-chair at the head of the bed.

"So this is the girl, Emolyn Wyndeworth," said the elder officer, stooping down and gazing at the white and wasted face of the once beautiful maiden.

"This is the young lady."

The officer sighed and turned to inspect the room. He looked at the windows and found them safe, being three stories high, and a sheer descent of sixty feet to the sidewalk. Then he examined the other outlets from the room, and found but two—one into an inner dressing-room without another door, and one into the hall.

"There is but one door to be guarded," he said. "We will take up our post in the hall outside."

And with that he beckoned his comrade and retreated from the chamber.

Subsequently a sofa was placed in the hall, so that, at night, one officer might sleep while the other watched.

That afternoon everything was very quiet in the house of the tragedy.

Emolyn Wyndeworth lay, scarcely breathing, on her

bed, watched by the physician and nurse, while her door was guarded by the policemen, who sat silent, or conversed only in low tones.

Mrs. Warde was heavily sleeping off the effects of her overdose of alcohol.

In the back parlor below stairs lay the body of the little babe, whom the undertaker had already prepared for burial, and placed in its tiny coffin.

The two young negroes, Philip and Phillis, sat in the kitchen alone, and "waiting orders," but too much frightened to move or speak.

While everything was so quiet inside the house of woe, the latter was the one subject of excitement, the one theme of discourse, in the city outside.

The evening papers were full of the reports and details of "The Tragedy at Green Point." "Shocking Occurrence!" "Most Distressing Case of Infanticide!" and so forth, and so forth, as it was variously styled in the different journals.

The night passed very silently.

The next day the body of the little infant was quietly committed to its nameless grave in the cemetery; but Emolyn knew nothing of all this; she lay too ill to take cognizance of any occurrence around her.

For three days the unfortunate young girl lay hovering between life and death. On the fourth she awoke to half consciousness and inquired, petulantly, for her dear nurse, Melpomene.

Then the doctor promised that the nurse should be forthcoming immediately.

He went to seek Mrs. Warde and told her that old Monica was quite worn out with watching, and that Emolyn had asked for her own attendant.

Then Mrs. Warde explained that she had detected Melpomene in a theft, and had caused her to be locked

up; but that the horrible discovery made three days before had caused her to forget all about the woman.

So saying, she drew a key from her pocket, and rang the bell for her man-servant.

When Philip appeared, she gave him the key, and told him to go and release Melpomene.

"And hark you, my man," said the doctor, "if the woman knows nothing of what has occurred in the house, do not mention it to her; for this affair must not be discussed near the sick-room."

"I won't say nothing, Marse Doctor," sadly replied Philip, as he went out.

Nor, truth to tell, had he any cause to say anything, having already told Melpomene all that he dared to tell of the terrible trouble that had fallen upon the head of her unhappy young mistress.

The way in which he happened to do it was this:

He had not forgotten the poor prisoner in the cellar-closet, as had Mrs. Warde. He remembered her first at supper-time on the night she was locked up. Fearing to ask his stern mistress any favor, he just prepared some food and took it to Pony's door. He could not open that door, but above it there was a window with a revolving shutter, for ventilating the closet.

Philip rolled an empty barrel to the door, turned it up on end, climbed upon it, and brought his face on a level with the ventilator, which he immediately opened.

"Oh, thank goodness, Phil., you give me a breath of air!" said the voice of Pony from below.

"I fotch yer somfin else beside that. Here, now stand right under while I let down dis basket with a cord. Here, now, here's a coffee-pot full of coffee, with a cork in the spout to keep it from spilling, and here's bread and meat, and a paper of sugar, and a bottle of

milk, and some butter, and pepper, and salt. Eat your supper comfortable now, gal, and when bed-time come, I will push through a pillow and quilt so you can sleep comfortable."

"Oh, what a good soul you is, Philip! But, boy, 'stead o' you bringing me them bedclothes, you send Phillis with them, which will be properer," gratefully replied Melpomene.

"Sartainly; now I understand that good, Miss Melpony."

"But there's one thing, Philip, that I must depend on your s'perior understanding for—that is to bring me news of my young mist'ess. I' so feared she will come to some harm, while I ain't dere to watch over her."

"Nebber you fear, Miss Pony. I'll bring you news of your young lady," replied the man.

And then, at Pony's request, Philip took the basket, with the empty dishes in it, bade the prisoner good-night, and went away, to be succeeded by Phillis, who brought bed-clothes and whatever other comfort or convenience she could bestow upon her fellow-servant.

The next day Philip had terrible news to bring Pony of her young mistress, but he had the prudence to suppress half of it, and only told the woman that Miss Emolyn was very ill and was carefully attended by Dr. Willet and Aunt Monica.

This filled the poor, locked-up nurse with the deepest anxiety, but it was a subject upon which she could not even question her friend too closely; so she had to content herself with asking him from time to time, as he appeared:

"How is Miss Emolyn?"

And to rest satisfied with his vague answer:

"'Bout de same;" or: "A little better."

On this fourth morning, Philip, instead of climbing

on the top of the barrel and looking in at the ventilator over the door, boldly unlocked the door and entered the closet, exclaiming :

"Hooray ! Pony ! Your young mist'ess is better, and has axed for you, and de doctor—Marse Doctor Willet, you know—says as she must have you !"

"Ah ! I's so glad ! And you's come to 'liver me from my prison ? Glory ! Now I wonder how that old hyena thinks I been living all this time ! I reckon she 'spects to see me starved, and half dead ; as I would a been only for you, Phil. !" exclaimed Pony, as she came joyously forth from her prison, and followed her friend up stairs.

"I tell you what," whispered the boy, as they reached the landing and approached the parlor.

"Ole mist'ess been lookin' scared ! I misdoubt as she thinks she's been a doing somefin unlawful, locking you up, and starving you to death ! Now, I reckon, she won't only be s'prised, but right down 'lieved in her mind to see you lookin' as well as you do ! But *mum's* the word, mind you ! Now here we is. I hope de doctor's dere with her still."

"Why ?" whispered Pony.

"'Cause his being dere will keep her in order," muttered Philip, as he opened the door.

The doctor was "there with her still."

"Come hither, Melpomene. You are only now released from your well-deserved confinement, because your young mistress is ill and needs your services. She has asked for you, in fact," said Mrs. Warde, as the two negroes entered.

"Very well, madam, I shall be glad to wait on my young mistress," answered Melpomene, in so firm and free a voice that Mrs. Warde glanced up with surprise

that, in seeing how well her supposed famishing prisoner looked, grew to astonishment.

She was too prudent to express her feeling in words, however, so she only said :

"Go up to your mistress's room and relieve Monica, who is there."

Melpomene slightly bent her head and turned to go.

"Excuse me, madam. I will have to speak to this woman, and give her some instruction before sending her to my patient," said the doctor, rising and following Melpomene.

He overtook her in the hall.

"Come in here, my good girl. I have a word to say to you," whispered the doctor, as he led the way to the little study, where, once upon a time, old Captain Wyndeworth used to retire to study out new salads, sauces and punches, with which to surprise, delight, and regale his guests, the boon companions of his bachelor-hall days.

"Now, Melpomene, tell me, are you aware of what has occurred in this house during the three days of your incarceration ?"

"Yes, sir, my young mistress has been very ill indeed."

"Do you know what has been the matter with her ?"

"I kinder think I do, sir."

"You have, perhaps, known the state of her health previous to this illness ?"

"Only for about a week past, sir."

"She must have kept her secret with unusual success ! Then that is all you know ?"

"Yes, sir ; but I would like to ask—"

"Well, what ?"

"Excuse me, sir; but now I have heard that my mistress is safe, I would like to ask, but it would be taking too great a liberty—"

Here Pony became silent; but the doctor, divining the cause of her anxiety, said:

"You would like to ask what has become of the child?"

"Yes, sir."

"The unfortunate child is dead and buried. That is why I called you out here, that you may not be surprised by anything you may hear into any outcry that may disturb your mistress. You must not be surprised at the appearance of a couple of policemen in the upper hall. They are on duty there."

Here Pony suddenly turned so ashen gray that the doctor hastened to tell her that there was no real cause for alarm. Then softening matters as much as possible, he informed her of the manner of the babe's death, and the necessity of an investigation by the proper authorities; but that it would be a mere form, for there was no doubt the unhappy mother would be declared to have been insane, and, upon that plea, would be set at liberty.

Pony could utter no word of reply to all this. She stood facing the doctor with the same ashen-gray hue that had overspread her visage at the first intimation of the unnatural and horrible crime with which her gentle young mistress stood charged.

"I have told you all this to guard you against any sudden shock that might cause exclamations or outcries in the presence of your mistress which might prove fatal to her in her present precarious condition. Pray, now, use all your powers of self-control for her sake. She does not know yet that she is accused of this crime, and

is in custody of these two policemen. Guard her from all knowledge of these facts, as you would save her life. Do you think now, that you have sufficient courage to do all this?"

"I have sufficient love for my dear unhappy child to do anything in the world for her sake," answered Pony in a firm voice, though her cheek was yet a shade paler.

"Then you may go up to her at once," said Dr. Willet.

Pony went out of the study, but paused at the foot of the stairs, to lift up one earnest, silent prayer for strength to do her most difficult duty.

Then she hurried up to the room of her mistress.

She saw the two policemen on guard at the door. She passed them with a shudder, and entered the room, where she found old Monica still on the watch by the bedside.

"Ah! this is a pitiful sight," whispered the old woman, pointing to the pallid form on the bed, as Melpomene approached. "But, *hush-sh-sh!* she has dropped asleep again, and it is as much as her life is worth to wake her. You just slip into my chair when I slip out."

This exchange was silently effected and Monica went from the chamber, leaving Melpomene on the watch.

Dr. Willet had left the house to go on his morning round among his other patients.

Mrs. Warde was sitting alone in her parlor, when her footman entered bringing a visitor's card upon a small salver.

The widow took it with a frown, exclaiming fretfully:

"Now I wonder who has the bad taste to call on me at such a time as this?"

She glanced at the name on the card, started, turned pale, and then, with a darker frown, gazed more attentively.

Yes, she had seen aright! It was no mistake! The card bore the name of

LEWIS BERNERS,
ATTORNEY AT LAW,
*Blackville, Va.*

It was the last name as its owner was the last person, she would have wished to see in this world.

She dropped the card upon her lap and sank back in her chair, covering her face with her hands.

She sat thus until her waiting servant inquired respectfully:

"What must I say to the gentleman, madam?"

She started as if from a dream.

"There is no escape! I must see him!" she murmured to herself. "Tell him to come in," she said aloud.

## CHAPTER XIII.

DOOM.

Death should come
Gently, to one of gentle mould like thee,
As light winds, wandering through groves of bloom,
Detach the delicate blossoms from the tree.
BRYANT.

The door opened, and Lewis Berners entered the room.

He was a tall spare man, with a thin, fair face, and wavy, gray hair and beard.

He wore a dusty, brown travelling suit, and carried a soft felt cap in his hand.

He looked, at the same time, wearied, hurried and excited.

He strode across the floor, and stood before the lady, and without the slightest salutation, sternly demanded:

"In the name of Heaven, madam, what is this terrible calamity that you have suffered to fall upon this child, Emolyn Wyndeworth?"

"She is no longer a child, but a woman, and a criminal: and her calamity, as you call it, is but the consequence," said Mrs. Warde, coldly and defiantly.

"'A woman, and a criminal,' at fifteen years of age!" indignantly exclaimed Mr. Berners.

"Beg pardon; Emolyn Wyndeworth is nearly sixee.'

"And what difference does that make? She is a child; a motherless child; a culpably neglected child, I am sure, or she never could have strayed to the brink of such a precipice, and fallen over such an abyss, Mrs. Warde. About a year ago—no, not so long—about ten months ago, on hearing that Major Wyndeworth, my colleague in the guardianship of this girl, was stricken down with paralysis, I wrote to ask you whether Miss Wyndeworth had not better be sent home to me. You replied that she would stay at Green Point. I did not press the question then; but in learning through the newspapers of the death of Major Wyndeworth, I wrote and requested that my ward should be delivered into my charge—into that of her only remaining guardian. You answered by entreating me to leave the child in your care at Green Point; for that *you* loved Emolyn, and *she* loved her home. I yielded, somewhat against my better judgment, but the more readily, because I had then some thoughts of going to Europe—thoughts that I put into practice very soon after. I have just returned from several months of foreign

travel. I was but passing through this city, when I took up a paper and read the astounding fact that the daughter of the late General Wyndeworth had been arrested for child-murder !"

"She is still in this house, however, an unconscious prisoner in custody of two policemen, who watch her by turns, and so she must remain until she is well enough to be removed."

"Or until she dies ! That is the very best thing she could do, poor, poor child ! Not that I believe her guilty ! I know the stock she comes of too well ! One does 'not gather thorns of fig-trees !' No, she cannot be guilty : that is impossible for *her ;* but the bare accusation is more than enough to blast her life ! So it is better that she should die ! God is more merciful than man ! But, Mrs. Malvina Warde ! it were better that *you* had never been born, than that any criminal neglect or abuse on your part should have left or driven this motherless girl to her ruin !" said Lewis Berners, with terrible earnestness.

"How DARE you speak to me in that way ?" fiercely broke forth the widow.

"Because I *know* you, madam ! And because I suspect foul play, and shall act upon my suspicions !"

"This to a lady !"

"*No ;* but to an 'unwomaned' woman !"

"I cannot tell why I do not call a servant and have you ejected from the house !" exclaimed the widow, white with rage.

"But *I* know why you will not do it. I know, also, why you will not *openly* object to my sending to the hotel for my trunk, and taking up my quarters in this house for as long as I choose to stay ! That will be as long as my unhappy ward is permitted to remain."

"Do you mean to say you will *force* your company upon me?"

"Not by any means. I will never even *see* you against your will. But I remain in this house just so long as my unhappy young ward is suffered to stay."

"And you call yourself a—gentleman?"

"Not at all. I leave that for other people to do!"

Malvina Warde stamped with fury.

"Pray do not perform a war-dance, my dear madam. We are not among the Comanches! But be good enough to tell me the name of the physician who is attending Emolyn Wyndeworth?" coolly requested the visitor.

"I shall do nothing of the sort! You dare to thrust yourself into my house, and tell me that you mean to stay as long as you please—which will be as long as that wretched girl dishonors it with her presence! You do this against my will, and in defiance of my protest. But if I cannot prevent you from doing this—"

"You *can* prevent it, of course. The house is your own. You can prevent my staying here, if you choose to take the consequences. But since you yield at all, you should yield with grace."

"I will not answer any of your questions."

"Very well. I must find out for myself," said Mr. Berners, rising and leaving the room.

In the hall outside he found the footman, Philip.

"What doctor is attending Miss Wyndeworth?" he inquired.

"Dr. Willet, sir."

"Where does he live?"

"Opposite St. Peter's Church, sir; on the hill, about a mile from here."

"Very well, open the door and let me out."

With a bow, Philip obeyed, and Mr. Berners sprang

into the hack that was still waiting for him, and ordered the driver to go to the office of Dr. Willet, opposite St. Peter's Church.

A rapid drive brought them up to the doctor's door just as the latter had come up in his gig.

The two gentlemen alighted at the same moment, and stood looking at each other, expectantly, for an instant. Both bowed slightly.

"Dr. Willet, I hope?" said the visitor.

"The same, sir, at your service."

"I am Lewis Berners, of Blackville, Virginia. I am the guardian of your most unhappy young patient, Emolyn Wyndeworth. Can I have a few moments' conversation with you?"

"Assuredly," answered the doctor.

Then giving his servant orders to keep the gig waiting, he led the way into his snug office.

"This is not my hour for receiving patients, so we will be alone and uninterrupted for some time. You come on account of your ward, sir?"

"Yes. I have but just returned from a six months' tour in Europe, and only learned to-day of the terrible catastrophe that has occurred. Will you tell me all that you are at liberty to disclose?"

"I can tell you all that in a few days must be given under oath in open court," said the doctor, as he offered his visitor a seat and took one himself.

When both gentlemen were seated, the doctor gave the lawyer the history of the case, as far as his own limited knowledge of it went.

"And now," said Dr. Willet, "let me end by saying that I do not believe that girl is in *any* respect guilty! The more I have seen of her, during her illness, the surer I feel that she is, or has been, legally and sacredly married, and that if she hurt her own child

at all, it was during some paroxysm of agony of insanity, that must have rendered her unconscious of, irresponsible for, her act. I do not believe, either, that a jury could be found to convict her."

"And yet, great Heaven, she must be tried!" groaned the guardian.

"Most unfortunately, yes! I have just been informed that the grand jury have found a true bill of indictment against her, and that she will be arraigned at the summer term of the Criminal Court."

"Yet she still remains at Green Point?"

"Yes, because hitherto she has been too ill to be taken away. She is yet totally unconscious of the terrible accusation against her. The warrant for her arrest has not been served upon her. It is held by a policeman who, with the help of a comrade, guards her door day and night."

"How long will this reprieve last?"

"But a few hours longer. I put off the evil day as long as possible; but to-morrow morning she is to be removed."

"To prison?"

"To prison, if she should live through the arrest. But I fear the shock will kill her."

"It would be better that it should."

"No, no! If she should live and be acquitted, as I am sure she must be, she may also be able, at some future time, to quite vindicate herself. I have done my utmost to save her life and to prepare her (physically I mean) to sustain the shock. I have given her tonics to increase her strength, and sedatives to lower her sensitiveness and excitability. I shall keep up this treatment until to-morrow morning; then I shall have to break to her as tenderly as possible the intelligence of that which

is awaiting her; and—I would be better satisfied if you would consent to be present at the interview."

"Of course, since you permit it, I shall remain at Green Point until she is removed. Then I will take lodgings near the court-house and prison, so as to be always near her. If she should survive this terrible ordeal I shall take her down to Blackville to my sister's; or I may even go abroad again and take her with me."

"But that would be a great sacrifice of your time."

"No, I have retired from my profession. A childless widower like myself, with two elderly sisters well provided for, has no special inducement to hard labor in his latter days. Besides, under any circumstances, I would do much more than I have promised for my dear friend, Wyndeworth's daughter."

"I am going back to Green Point immediately after dinner. Since you also are bound thither, I hope that you will stop and dine with me, and then take a seat in my gig," said the doctor.

The visitor accepted the invitation as frankly as it was offered, and just stepped to the door to pay and discharge the carriage.

An hour later the doctor and guest, having dined together, took their seats in the gig and drove over to Green Point.

"Can I be permitted to visit my ward this evening?" inquired Mr. Berners, as he followed Dr. Willet into the house.

"I will see her first. But tell me, did you ever meet her personally?"

"Intimately, when she was a child of from five to seven. I was a great favorite in those days."

"Come up stairs. There is a sofa in the hall outside her room. If you will not mind the proximity of the

policemen you can take a seat there, for a few minutes when I go in."

The visitor bowed, and accompanied the doctor up stairs and to the door of Emolyn's chamber.

But before Dr. Willet could turn the latch one of the officers advanced to him and said:

"I am very sorry, sir, but I am directed to take my prisoner to-morrow morning."

"I know it. The grand jury have indicted her, and of course, she must be removed. I will try to prepare her for the change," replied the doctor, with a grave nod, as he passed into Emolyn's room.

He found his young patient awake and in conversation with her nurse, Melpomene, who was seated by her side.

The woman arose and gave way to the physician.

"How do you feel this evening, my child?" inquired Dr. Willet, seating himself in the vacated chair and taking the girl's hand in his own.

"I am getting stronger. I am going to live—more is the pity," answered Emolyn, in a quiet, depressed tone.

"But you should not say that. You should be glad and thankful that your life is spared."

Emolyn shook her head.

"Every one believes evil of me—evil that I do not deserve. I have broken no law. I have failed in no duty. I was a wife before I was a mother. Every one ought to know that, for how on earth do they suppose I could have been a mother without having been a wife?" she inquired, opening wide her large, blue eyes.

"How, indeed!" gravely responded the doctor. "But, my dear, the time has come now when you should have no secrets from your friends; when you should

give them the means of vindicating you. Tell me, who was your husband, my dear?"

"I cannot tell you now—except this, that he has passed away from the earth. His father lives—a childless old man. I ought to have told *him* long ago, but I was afraid of him; when I get well, however, I will tell *him* first. If he believes me, if he accepts me, then I will let every one know. If he disbelieves and rejects me, then I will bury my secret in the grave of my husband, since I have no way of proving my marriage."

"Well, my child, we will talk no more on this subject to-night. To-morrow I may be able to persuade you to confide in your friends."

"Ah, Doctor, what friends have I, apart from you and my poor nurse, Melpomene?" said Emolyn, with quiet sadness.

"My dear, do you not remember the friends of your early childhood?"

"Oh, yes! but they are all gone—all gone!"

"Not all! Do you remember Lewis Berners of Blackville?"

Emolyn paused for a moment, murmuring·

"Lew—is Ber—ners?"

Then, as a soft light broke over her face, she said:

"Oh, yes, yes, certainly I do—the good old friend of my dear father and mother, dear old Lewis Berners—yes."

"Would you like to see him?"

"Yes, indeed I would," she answered, earnestly, but without excitement, for she was still under the influence of the sedatives the doctor had given her.

"Then you shall see him to-night, for he is outside, waiting your permission to enter."

"Bring him in at once, Dr. Willet. It will make me feel like a child again to see him," she said. Then, as

by a sudden flash of memory, she added: "But oh! does he know?"

"Yes, my dear, he knows as much as I do, and he believes as I do."

"Thank Heaven! Let him come in."

Dr. Willet left the room, and soon returned with the gray-haired lawyer, who came up to the bedside with as much composure as he could command, and took the extended hand of Emolyn, saying:

"I am sorry to see that you have been ill, my dear."

But his voice trembled and broke down, even in uttering these very commonplace words.

"Uncle Lewis, it is so long since I saw you! I should have expected to see quite an old man, but you don't look a day older than you did when you used to ride me on your shoulder," was the answer of his ward.

"That was nine years ago, Emolyn. You were a child of seven years then; now you are a girl of sixteen. I was then a man of forty-one, now I am fifty. So you see the change would very naturally be very great in you, but little in me."

"I thought you had quite forgotten me, Uncle Lewis."

"I have been travelling since the death of your senior guardian, my love; and believing you to be safe and happy in the care of your kinswoman, I gave myself too little concern. But now, my dear girl, just as soon as you shall be able to travel, I shall assert my claims as your only surviving guardian, and take you down to Virginia with me, and either place you in charge of my sisters, or else install you at Wynde Slopes with a careful governess."

"Oh, I wish you would! Oh, how I wish you would!" exclaimed Emolyn, clasping her hands and speaking with an energy she had not exhibited during the interview.

"Well, there! Don't excite yourself, my dear. I *will*. I certainly *will*. I give you my word for it," said Lewis Berners, earnestly.

"Now, sir, I fear I must really turn you out of the room. My patient must have repose. I shall give her a sleeping draught in a few minutes," said Dr. Willet, kindly, but firmly.

"Quite right. I acknowledge the necessity. You will find me in the hall outside when you want me," good-humoredly replied the visitor.

Then turning to Emolyn, he said:

"I hope you will sleep well, my child. Heaven bless you. Good-night."

As Mr. Berners left the room, Melpomene entered with a small waiter on which stood a bowl of beef-tea and a plate of dry toast.

"That is right, nurse. You must feed your patient well," said the doctor, as, with his own hands, he placed a little stand beside the bed.

Pony put her waiter down upon it.

Then it required the united efforts of the physician and the nurse to prevail on Emolyn to partake of these nourishing refreshments. But Dr. Willet argued, and Pony coaxed, until the gentle invalid had eaten all that was set before her.

"Now, nurse, in an hour from this you must give her this composing draught, and if she should not fall asleep within an hour from the time she takes it, you must come down into the study and let me know. I shall wait there until ten o'clock. It is eight now. Do you understand? And can you follow my directions?"

"Yes, sir. Oh, yes, sir," answered Pony.

"Good-night, my dear. Keep yourself quiet. I

shall see you again to-night, sleeping or waking," said Dr. Willett, as he left the room.

He found Mr. Berners waiting for him in the hall.

"Come! let us go down into the study. We have much to discuss. I shall remain here until ten o'clock, at least—perhaps all night," said the doctor.

Mr. Berners arose to follow him; but Dr. Willet suddenly paused, saying:

"Stop! I have a question to ask this officer.

"Tell me at what hour you have to remove this unhappy young lady?"

"It is somewhat at discretion, Doctor. I am directed to take her to prison to-morrow morning. That may be any time before noon. I will make it as late as I can," replied the policeman.

"Thanks. That is all. Come, Mr. Berners."

With these words the physician led the way down stairs to that curious little study in which the late Captain Wyndeworth used to read, not books of history or science, but of cookery; where he used to study, not political or social philosophy, but sauces, salads, and punches!

"Sit down here, Mr. Berners," said the doctor, pushing the late captain's easy chair toward the visitor, and throwing himself into a rocker, and then continuing:

"I have had many disagreeable duties to perform in my life—they belong to my profession—but the most painful part I have ever had to play, is to prepare my poor patient for the shock of her arrest! To-night I have done my best to insure her eight or ten hours of refreshing sleep. That will strengthen her. To-morrow, after she has breakfasted, I will break to her the news of this accusation! But, ah, Heaven! how can I break it so that it will not be a fatal blow when it falls?"

"We must go to her together. We must assure her

upon oath, if necessary, that her arrest and trial will be only forms; that she is in no sort of danger; that her acquittal is certain; that after her release she shall go down to Virginia and live in peace; or, if she should prefer it, she shall go across the ocean and make the tour of Europe. We must support her and encourage her through this terrible trial—this horrible ordeal!" said Lewis Berners.

"But—you are a lawyer and better able to judge of what the law *may* or may not do, in this case. Are you so certain of an acquittal?"

"Have you in your narrative given me all the facts?"

"All, so far as I know them. All, I think, that will come before the jury."

"Then I may say I feel quite sure of her acquittal. As her guardian, I shall of course employ the best, the most experienced counsel to be procured. No expense shall be spared."

"The girl has been married. Ah, if she could only be induced to tell us the name of her husband."

"We must persuade her to do so," said Mr. Berners.

At this moment the door opened and Melpomene entered, saying:

"My mistress has fallen into a deep sleep, Doctor."

"What! you have not given her the composing draught so soon after her food?"

"Oh, no, sir; she dropped into a deep sleep without it. That is the reason why I came to let you know."

"Very well. Do not disturb her; but if she should wake up and be restless, give her the draught."

"Yes, sir."

"And I will look in on her before I leave the house."

"Thank you, sir," said Melpomene, as she courtesied and withdrew.

The two men talked on until eleven o'clock, when the

doctor arose to go; but first he said that he would visit his patient.

He stepped silently up the stairs, and found her fast asleep. Then he came down, bid good-night to Mr. Berners, and departed.

Lewis Berners, for want of better accommodations in this *now* inhospitable house, stretched himself on the study sofa, to rest his weary frame, but without a hope of forgetting his troubles in sleep.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### REVELATION.

Hope, precious pearl, in sorrow's cup
Unmelted at the bottom lay,
To shine again when, all drunk up,
The bitterness should pass away. MOORE.

Lewis Berners arose from his uncomfortable couch at a very early hour, and went out into the hall to see if he could find a servant who could accommodate him with water and towels.

He found Philip, the footman, in the act of sweeping off the front door-steps.

He made his request to the man, who showed not the slightest surprise at the presence of the unbidden guest, for since the police had been in the house, Philip could not have been astonished at anything that might have happened; but he conducted the lawyer to an upper bedroom, where all conveniences for the morning toilet were supplied to him.

"The doctor will be here for an early cup of coffee

in the study, sir," began Philip, "which, if you would like—"

"Certainly," interrupted Mr. Berners, quickly, "I would like to breakfast with the doctor:" whereupon the man left the room

When the visitor had refreshed himself, he went down stairs to the study, where he found the doctor already seated at a little breakfast-table.

"Sit down. Sit down and join me in a cup of coffee. I have just been up to see my patient. I find that she has slept soundly through the night. She must not be waked. The sleep will brace her up," said Dr. Willet, as he stretched out his hand and drew up a chair for Mr. Berners.

"I hope so; she will need all the strength she can get," sighed the lawyer, as he seated himself.

Notwithstanding their anxiety, the two gentlemen did ample justice to the substantial breakfast of hot bread and beefsteak that Philip thought proper to bring also with the coffee.

"It is now eight o'clock," said the doctor, consulting his watch as soon as their repast was concluded—"eight o'clock, and she is to be removed before twelve. I will go and see if she is awake."

"And send for me when you want me," said Mr. Berners.

"Yes, certainly."

Dr. Willet went up stairs to the third floor. He shuddered as he passed the two policemen, and remembered that when they should leave they would take his patient with them.

But he passed on and rapped at Emolyn's door.

Melpomene opened it.

"Has your mistress awakened?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir, directly after you left the room. I have

got her up and dressed, and I have given her some breakfast, as you ordered, sir, and now she is ready to see you," Pony explained, with almost a smile on her worn and anxious face.

The doctor followed the woman into the room, where he found Emolyn up and dressed, and reclining, supported by pillows, in an easy-chair.

"I hope I find you better this morning, my child?" said Dr. Willet, as he drew a chair to her side, and sat down; taking her wrist in his hand to count the pulse.

"'Better?' Yes, Doctor. You have been so good to me," replied Emolyn, so quietly that the physician perceived the sedative effect of his drugs. "But now I want to speak to you about something. Will you send Pony out of the room? Or no! I will do it. Pony, go down stairs and get your breakfast while the doctor stays with me," she added, turning her face towards her nurse.

The woman went out, closing the door after her.

"Now, Emolyn, my dear, what have you to say to me? Remember, you may tell your physician anything you please. He is bound to keep your secret as a priest is bound to keep the secrets of confession," said the doctor, in a gentle, encouraging tone, for he hoped that the unfortunate young creature was about to confide to him the name of the man who had so deeply wronged her by a secret marriage.

"Doctor," she began, in a whisper. "Oh, Doctor! Tell me. I have been thinking about it ever since I came back to my senses, but I have not dared to speak of it to any one—I could not bear to speak of it even to Pony."

Here she shivered, and covered her thin face with her hands.

"Do not distress yourself, my dear child, but tell me what you wish," said Dr. Willet, kindly.

"I am not distressed; I am—I don't know what! I seem to have lost the power of feeling anything as I ought to feel it, even the piteous death of the poor baby. That was what I wanted to ask about, Doctor Willet, only I could not talk of it even to Pony. But now you will tell me. They buried the poor little body, did they not, while I was too ill to know anything about it?"

"Yes, my child."

"But, oh, for pity's sake, did no one try to find out who hurt the poor, little, helpless, harmless child so that it died?"

"Yes, my dear, there was an inquest; but, as often happens, the jury made a mistake, and accused the wrong person."

"Whom did they accuse—*Mrs. Warde?* It is an awful thing to say, but she hates me, and she is the only one whom I could suspect of wishing harm to me, or to my child. *Was it Mrs. Warde?*"

The words were spoken calmly, the question put without eagerness. The doctor took her wrist again and felt the pulse. It was beating slowly and quietly. She had spoken truly when she said that she seemed to have lost the power of feeling anything as she ought to feel it. She was still under the influence of that powerful sedative, mercifully administered by the good physician to deaden the sense of bodily or mental pain.

Dr. Willet thought he might now venture to begin his own most distressing task.

"No, my child, they did not charge Mrs. Warde with the deed," he answered.

"Who in the world else? Not one of the poor colored women? They never could have done such a cruel deed."

"No, my child," said Dr. Willet, still keeping his hand upon her pulse. "No; it was some one else, who might have done it accidentally or unconsciously."

Emoyln put her hand to her head and knit her brows —but still without excitement.

"I cannot think, then, whom they could have found to accuse," she said at length, as she wearily dropped her hand again.

During the silence that ensued the clock on the mantelpiece struck ten.

The doctor started at the sound. In less than two hours the unfortunate girl must be lodged in prison. He must prepare her for the shock.

"Who have they accused of my child's death, Doctor?" asked Emolyn.

"One who could never have hurt the child, or, if she did, did so unconsciously. Emolyn, do you not know that you were very ill, probably delirious, when this babe was given to you?" solemnly inquired Dr. Willet.

"I suppose I was. Do you mean some one came in while I was in that state, and unable to save my babe— and that they hurt it?"

"No, Emolyn. They think you hurt the babe," gravely replied Dr. Willet, still keeping his hand upon her pulse, which did not quicken the least.

"What did you say, Doctor Willet? I did not quite hear you," she answered, with a puzzled look.

"The jury charge you with hurting your babe," repeated the doctor.

"I—I don't understand," slowly replied Emolyn, with a sorely perplexed look.

"Oh, my child! my child! they charge you, *you* Emolyn with having caused the death of your child. But—" (the pulse under his finger stopped for about three seconds, and then went on a little faster than before).

The doctor arose and poured out a half-glass of water, into which he dropped a few drops of colorless liquid from a vial and handed her, saying:

"Drink this."

She drank it silently.

The doctor replaced the glass, resumed his seat, took her hand in his, and said:

"But no one believes this, Emolyn. Of course, no one *could* believe it."

She shook her head slowly and in silence.

"Still, my dear, though no one believes it of you, there are forms in law that must be observed. And, as you have been charged with this deed, my dear Emolyn, it is necessary, even for your own sake, that the case should be investigated, in order that you may be cleared—*cleared*, Emolyn! For you are certain to be cleared. Do you understand me, my poor child?"

"Oh, yes, I understand, I understand what you are trying to break to me, what you are trying to soften to me. Oh, the deep dishonor! Oh, the deep dishonor!" she moaned in a quiet, almost dying voice, but without the nervous excitement that the sedative drug still subdued.

"Understand this, also, my child, that not a hair of your head shall be hurt. Your guardian, Mr. Berners, one of the most eminent jurists of the age, assures me of that, and wishes to assure you of it also. Will you see him now?"

"Yes; but, oh, the deep dishonor!—oh, the deep dishonor! Oh, that I could die now!" she moaned, in quiet, heart-broken tones. "Oh that I could die now! Oh, the deep dishonor of this day!"

"My child, there is no dishonor where there is no guilt. There may be distress, sorrow, even anguish; but powerful friends will stand by you: and above all,

the Father of the fatherless will comfort and sustain you. And, finally, you will be vindicated."

She did not reply, but covered her face with her hands. The potent drug that had been given her by the good physician to dull the sense of pain, had indeed, quieted her nervous system so that there could be no violent outbreak of grief or terror or horror; but it had left her intellect clear enough to perceive the awfulness of her position.

"Shall I call Mr. Berners in?" inquired Dr. Willet.

"If you please," she replied, without removing her hands from her face.

Dr. Willett went to the door and beckoned the lawyer. Mr. Berners entered silently.

"She bears it better than I could have hoped," whispered the former.

"She looks overwhelmed—crushed," replied the latter, after a glance at the unhappy girl.

"If I had not put her under the influence of a powerful sedative, she would have been dead or mad," whispered the doctor, as they crossed the room.

"My little Emolyn, my dear Emolyn, you must not be frightened; you shall not be harmed. You have powerful friends to protect you," said Mr. Berners, laying his hand, as in benediction, on the bowed young head—"powerful friends to protect and defend you."

"But, oh! my friends with all their power cannot save me from prison, wailed the heart-broken girl.

"No, for they are not omnipotent, my poor child; but they can make all things easy for you, and they can assure you of a final vindication. My dear, dear Emolyn, you may be inconvenienced and annoyed, but you cannot be endangered."

"But I shall be imprisoned! Oh! the deep, deep

degradation of this day!" moaned the crushed child, who still kept her face hidden from view.

"There is no degradation where there is no guilt," began the lawyer.

"So I have tried to impress upon her," added the doctor.

"Think, my child," continued Mr. Berners, "how many pure and noble men and women have been unjustly accused, unjustly imprisoned. Has any one honored them less for their misfortunes? No, but *more*, for the heroism with which they have borne them."

While Mr. Berners spoke the clock struck eleven. There was a knock at the chamber door. The doctor went to answer it. He found the elder of the two policemen, who held the warrant, waiting for him.

Dr. Willet closed the door, and went out to speak with him.

"Sir, I am very sorry, but we must take our prisoner away within a few minutes. We have to deliver her by twelve o'clock," said the officer.

"Then I will order the carriage. There will be no objection to her guardian and maid accompanying her, I presume?"

"No, sir. I think not."

The doctor went down stairs, and sent the man-servant to the nearest livery stable to bring a hack. Then he summoned Melpomene, and ordered her to get ready to accompany her mistress on a drive.

The woman burst into tears.

"Oh, I know all about it. Nobody told me, but I found out by little things; the c'roner's quest, the p'lice an' everything! Oh, my dear, young mist'ess! Oh, my dear young mist'ess, as innocent as her own baby, is she!" sobbed the woman.

"Now look here Melpomene—if that is your ridicu-

lous name—you must positively control yourself! Your young mistress is in no danger. There is not a jury on earth but who would acquit her! But you must be a woman for her sake; for you are the only woman friend she has on earth, I think."

"Oh, I am! I am! I know I am! Poor desolate lamb!" sobbed Pony.

"Then you must calm yourself for her sake! for you have got to go to her now and stay with her until the carriage comes, and then to accompany her out. You must put off your howling until you find yourself alone, where the noise cannot disturb any one. There now, go and get on your bonnet, and then come to your young mistress."

Pony went sobbing away, and the doctor returned to Emolyn's room.

He found her as he had left her, sitting back in her easy-chair, with her hands pressed to her face.

"The carriage is ordered. She must leave in a few minutes," whispered Dr. Willet to Mr. Berners.

"I know that she must. I have told her. She is prepared. Poor child!" murmured the lawyer, in reply.

Something of the purport of this low tone colloquy reached the ears of the unhappy girl.

Removing her hands from her face, she inquired in an almost inaudible voice:

"Dr. Willet, Uncle Lewis, may my nurse, Pony, be permitted to go with me?"

"Surely, my child," replied the doctor, "that has been thought of and provided for. She is getting ready to attend you, and will soon be here."

"Is there any one else you would like to see before you go, my dear?" inquired the lawyer.

"No, no one."

"Not your cousin, Mrs. Warde?"

"Oh, no, no, not *her*—least of all *her*—never let her come near me!"

At this moment Pony entered with her bonnet and shawl hanging over one arm, and a bundle tied up in a handkerchief in the other hand.

She put all these things down, and not trusting herself to speak to her young mistress, she went about the room collecting such articles of clothing and convenience as she supposed Emolyn would require. These she packed into a large valise and placed beside her own bundle. Then she brought a pair of boots, a waterproof cloak, a black straw hat, and a gray vail to her mistress, and helped her to put them on. But not a word was spoken between them. Neither dared trust their self-control through such an ordeal.

After having dressed her mistress, Pony put on her own bonnet and shawl. And not too soon, as a knock at the chamber door soon proved.

Dr. Willet went and opened it.

"The hack is before the door, sir, and we dare not wait another moment. It is now half-past twelve," said the elder officer.

"I wish it were half-past doomsday!" testily retorted the doctor. "But we are ready. Don't come in. We will bring the poor girl out and put her in the carriage. You can watch us until she is there, and then you can ride on the box. But don't show yourself if you can help it."

"Lord knows, sir, I would spare the young lady and the family all I could," answered the officer.

The doctor returned to the room and whispered to the guardian:

"The hour has come. Take her arm and put her in the carriage. The police officer will be there, but will not be seen."

"Come Emolyn, my dear, take my arm ; trust in me ; no harm shall happen to you. Melpomene, follow us with those bundles," said Mr. Berners, as he took the hand of the miserable girl, lifted her from her seat and led her down stairs.

The doctor accompanied them, and Melpomene, heavily laden, followed.

Mr. Berners put Emolyn into the back-seat of the carriage, and entered and placed himself by her side.

Melpomene followed with her burden, all of which she arranged around her on the front seat.

The police officer mounted the box beside the driver and told him where to go.

"One moment," said Dr. Willet, as he put his head into the open window for a few last words to Emolyn. "Keep up your spirit, my child ; if it should sink, *pray!* pray for yourself, as I shall pray for you. I will see you again to-night and again to-morrow morning. Heaven bless you ! Go on."

## CHAPTER XV.

### IN PRISON.

Stone walls do not a prison make.
SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

An hour's drive through the city and out to the north-eastern suburbs, brought the party to the gates of the prison, a large, square, white, stone building, shaded by great, green forest trees, and surrounded by a high, white, stone wall. The white and green of this picture, under the clear blue sky of this May morning, must

have given it a free and cheerful aspect, but for glimpses of grim and grated windows, seen at intervals through the glimmering, green leaves.

The carriage drew up before the gates, which, at a summons from the policeman, swung open.

The carriage rolled up the broad gravel road to the great door of the prison.

The policeman got down from his seat beside the driver, and came around to help his prisoner to alight, but Dr. Willet had already opened the door, sprung out, and lifted his patient to the ground.

They entered the building and were gravely received by the warden, who led the party into his office and gave them chairs, while he placed himself at his desk, and began to write out a receipt for his new prisoner.

Dr. Willet turned and looked at Emolyn.

She sat near him, closely guarded, but looking strangely unconscious or indifferent to all that was going on.

The warden having signed his receipt, called a turnkey, and said:

"Conduct the prisoner to cell 45 in the women's ward."

Then Dr. Willet stepped up to the desk saying:

"This unhappy young lady has been my patient for some weeks. She has just risen from a sick bed. I hope it will not be against the rules to allow her to have the attendance of her nurse even in her cell."

The warden hesitated and looked at Emolyn, and for the first time saw her distinctly; he started, gazed and sighed, evidently struck and impressed by seeing the extreme youth and delicate beauty of the prisoner.

"There can be no objection, if the woman is quite willing to share the imprisonment of her mistress. We have else no right to lock her up," he replied.

"Oh, marster!" suddenly cried Melpomene, coming forward and clasping her hands in the earnestness of her appeal—'oh, sir, I'm not only willing but *dying* to stay 'long of my dear, darling young mist'ess. I could go down on my bended knees to pray to you to let me stay 'long of her, or to thank you for it, if you would."

"Well, you need not go to such extremes. If you do not object to it, no one else is likely to do so. Just follow that man," said the warden, pointing to the turnkey, who had taken the half stupefied Emolyn by the hand and was leading her away.

Melpomene needed no second permission, but sprang to the side of her mistress, whose arm she drew within her own, as she said to the turnkey:

"Let go of her hand; *I* can help my lady along."

The turnkey, a kind-hearted man, immediately dropped his hold, and smiled as he said:

"Come on then; don't loiter."

They went on up the stairs, followed by Dr. Willet, who did not wait for permission.

The turnkey took them to the women's ward, and to a corner cell that had the advantage of being double the size of the others, and of being lighted by two windows—one on the north, and one on the east.

"You will be able to see the sun rise here from behind the woods across the river. Sunrise is always a symbol of the passing away of darkness and sorrow, and the coming of light and joy," said Dr. Willet, as he followed Emolyn into the cell.

His care had made arrangements with the warden, and got this large corner room with its two windows assigned to Emolyn. His generosity had furnished it plainly but cheerfully with all that a young girl might require in a room that was to be her chamber and parlor in one. He had put a red and white carpet on the

floor; a little cottage set of furniture, painted red and white; and had hung the windows with red chintz and white muslin curtains, which, while they admitted the sunshine, concealed the grating. The room was daintily clean, and bathed in a rosy light.

Emolyn sank down mechanically on the soft easy-chair covered with white dimity.

Melpomene, with loving care, removed her bonnet, and hung it up in the little wardrobe; pulled off her boots and put them away, and replaced them with slippers which she took from her travelling-bag.

Emolyn received all these affectionate attentions with stolid apathy, as she now received everything, whether of good or evil.

"Still under the beneficent influence of my drugs—my blessed sedatives," said the doctor to himself. But to her he said:

"Now, my dear child, you will fancy yourself out on a visit, and keep up your spirits. I will come to see you twice a day. Mr. Berners will come as often. You will have plenty of company from outside. Pony will stay with you; so you will have plenty of attention within."

"Yes," Emolyn assented, with a weary sigh.

"You must get her to lie down, Pony, as soon as possible. I will arrange with the nearest restaurant to send in her meals. Do you understand?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, sir."

The kind-hearted doctor was loth to leave his young charge, but he observed her extreme weariness and drowsiness, the latter the effect of the drug he had administered, and he saw, too, the impatience of the turnkey, so he took up the languid hand of Emolyn, raised it to his lips, promised to see her again in the evening, and so left her.

He had witnessed many scenes of distress in his life and practice as a physician—he had done his best to shield this unfortunate girl from too keen a sense of her situation—yet he had never felt a pang of pity so sharp as when he left her in the prison cell and heard the key turn upon her!

He took the hack which had brought the party to the prison, and which, by his direction, had waited for him and, without returning to his own home, commenced at once a round of visits to his patients, from whom, indeed, he felt that he had been detained too long.

On his way back, however, he called at the nearest restaurant and ordered meals to be sent to cell 45 of the women's ward in the prison. He could not bring himself to utter the name of Emolyn Wyndeworth in that connection, but he told the proprietor that he himself would be responsible for the cost. Then he went on his professional rounds, and having completed them late in the afternoon he called at the Blackistone Hotel, where Mr. Berners was staying, to dine with the latter by appointment, to consult over the case of Emolyn.

Mr. Berners told Dr. Willet of the eminent counsel he had engaged to defend the accused, and further informed him that he should take these legal gentlemen to see his ward the next morning.

"She must really be induced to make a clean breast of it, and give up the name of her husband and his family," said Mr. Berners; "for I think if the whole truth were known, as she alone knows it, it would help her very much; for though I feel morally certain of her acquittal, yet I think that nothing should be left undone to insure such a result."

"I fear she will never reveal the name of her husband. She says that he is dead, and that she will now never

bring reproach upon his memory, or his family," replied Dr. Willet, with a deep sigh.

"These gentle creatures can be so obstinate in some respects," added Mr. Berners, as they both arose from the table.

They went from the hotel to the prison, but on inquiry found, from Pony's report, that Emolyn had slept the whole afternoon and was still sleeping.

The doctor left directions for her treatment, and both gentlemen left kind messages for her on her awakening.

Early the next morning Mr. Berners visited Emolyn Wyndeworth, taking with him the two most eminent lawyers of the city, whom he had engaged to defend her—namely, John Abbot and James Banks.

They found the poor girl up and dressed and reclining in her easy-chair, overwhelmed with grief and horror. The sedative effects of the drug had passed off, and the reaction had come, bringing with it a keen sense of all the misery of her situation.

Both Mr. Berners and the counsel he introduced to her did their utmost to console and reassure her.

They declared to her in the most positive manner that this imprisonment she suffered was really the worst evil that she would be called upon to endure; that her trial would be short and her acquittal and full vindication would be swift and certain. To make this vindication more effectual, they besought her to give up the name of the man who had wronged her by a secret marriage, and to tell them all the circumstances as they were known only to herself.

But here, even in the midst of all her grief, fear and horror, she refused to reveal her secret.

"No," she said; "now that this deep dishonor has fallen on me, I must be silent, forever silent on that subject. I can die, if I must, but I can never bring

reproach on the memory of my husband and the name of his family."

No persuasions, no arguments could move her from the stand she had taken.

So her counsel departed, disappointed in their design, and convinced that the only line of defense to be adopted would be that of paroxysmal insanity.

Dr. Willet and Mr. Berners visited Emolyn twice daily in her cell. They ministered so to her mind and body, by conversation and by discreet medication, that the delicate and sensitive girl was enabled to endure the horror of her position with more fortitude than any one could have credited her with.

It was the third week in May when she was committed to prison. The criminal court would open on the first of June. The docket was a short one, and there were but a few petty cases to be tried before that of Emolyn Wyndworth, charged with infanticide, should come on. It was, therefore, expected that she would be arraigned in the latter part of June. Emolyn's friends and counsel, confident of her innocence and of her final vindication, therefore did all in their power to sustain and bear her up over this painful month of imprisonment that must intervene before her trial and acquittal.

Mrs. Warde had not once been to see her since her incarceration ; nor, to be truthful, did Emolyn desire to meet the woman.

In the midst of her own great sorrows, Emolyn Wyndeworth did not forget the lesser troubles of her humble fellow-creatures, whom she had been accustomed to succor.

One day she inquired of Pony, if she—Pony—knew anything about poor Susan Palmer.

"You know she went to the hospital to be confined,

just before I was taken ill. Have you heard from her since that, Pony?" she asked.

"No, Miss Emolyn; and that has been five weeks ago. I reckon she must have been discharged and gone home before this."

"I wish you would go out to-day and inquire, and take her five dollars from me, Pony. Tell her that now Uncle Lewis has come, I have as much money as I want and more than I can spend, so she must let me know if she needs anything at all, that I may supply her."

The afternoon of that same day Pony went on her errand. It was the first occasion on which the faithful creature had left her mistress to go outside of the prison walls. She walked all the way across the city to the neighborhood of Green Point, and to the cottage occupied by John Palmer. Here she found the family in what were, for them, prosperous circumstances—the father was at work, and the children were all in health; but the mother was still at the hospital, slowly recovering from a long and tedious confinement.

Pony left the money and the message with the eldest girl, Anne, and then hurried back to her imprisoned mistress.

On re-entering the jail, poor Pony was subjected to what she protested against as a shameful and unpardonable indignity. She was taken into an empty cell and searched by two female turnkeys, to see if she had no poison nor deadly weapon concealed on her person for the use of her imprisoned mistress. As nothing of the sort was found upon her, she was permitted to go to her young lady.

"I won't tell Miss Emolyn nothin' 'tall 'bout this here," she said to herself. "Dear knows she has trouble 'nough on her own mind 'dout this! but, I do declare, I

never felt so ashamed of myself and my fellow-creeturs in all my life as I do to-day !"

She reached the cell, was admitted by the turnkey, an i found Emolyn weeping.

"Oh, Pony ! My heart sank as soon as I found myself alone ! I cannot bear to be alone, Pony ! I get such a horror of these four walls and that locked door, that I feel as if I should go raving mad and dash my brains out to attain my liberty !" she cried.

"Oh, my poor darling ! I did not want to leave you this morning, and I will never leave you again—never ! until we walk out together !" said the woman. And then, to divert the attention of her troubled mistress, Pony reported the prosperity of the Palmer family, and the slow convalescence of the mother in the woman's hospital.

"I would have gone over to the hospital myself, only I did not want to stay away from you so long ; so I sent the money and a message by Nancy Palmer," said Pony.

Emolyn answered :

"You did right."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### "GUILTY OR NOT GUILTY?"

The wretch condemned with life to part,
Still, still on hope relies:
And every pang that rends the heart
Bids expectation rise.
Hope, like a glimmering taper's light,
Adorns and cheers the way;
But still, as darker grows the night,
Emits a brighter ray.

GOLDSMITH

It was about a week after Pony's visit to the Palmer family, that Emolyn was lying one morning on her bed when the cell-door was harshly unlocked, and the voice of a turnkey was heard to say:

"She is in there. Go in, and you will find her."

A woman, carrying a child in her arms, entered.

The door was instantly clanged to and locked behind her.

Emolyn half rose from her reclining position to see, standing before her, Susan Palmer, with a young babe on her bosom.

"Oh, Mrs. Palmer, have you, indeed, come to see me?" exclaimed Emolyn, in emotion.

"Oh, my dear young lady! Oh, my dear young lady! That I should find you here! Oh, what injustice! Oh, what shame!" cried Susan Palmer, so

overcome by her feelings that she sank down on the chair Pony had set for her, and burst into tears.

"Don't cry, dear Mrs. Palmer. It does no good, you know, and there is nothing on earth worth crying for. I have shed the last tears I shall ever shed in this world," said Emolyn, in a voice of such calm despair that Susan Palmer burst forth with accelerated grief.

"You have brought me your baby to see. I thank you for that. Mine is in Heaven. Let me look at yours," said Emolyn, holding out her arms. She was now sitting on the side of the bed.

Susan Palmer wiped her reddened, tearful eyes and came and laid the baby on the girl's lap, and then opened the light, white flannel shawl in which it had been wrapped and revealed its face, and in her mother pride forgot for a moment her sorrowful sympathy with the unhappy young prisoner.

"I have brought her to see you first of all, Miss Emolyn. We were discharged from the woman's hospital this morning, and before going home I said I would come by and see you and show you my baby; for, oh, Miss Emolyn, she is so much like *you*. She is the very print of you! And no wonder, when you come to think of it; for your own sweet face was in my mind all the time! Seems to me I could see you just as plain as if you was a standing before me. But look at her, Miss, look what a lovely, fair skin and blue eyes she has got?"

Emolyn was gazing on the babe with a tender, tremulous interest.

"She is not the least like your other children, Mrs. Palmer," she said at length.

"Oh, no, Miss, not a bit. They are all dark, as why not, when their father and me are both as brown as berries, with eyes as black as sloes. But it was all

along of I thinking of you so much, Miss Emolyn, that she is the print of you."

"She is very pretty," said Emolyn, gazing fondly down on the mite.

"She is lovely, ma'am, though I say it as oughtn't to, she being of my own child."

"She is very tiny," continued Emolyn.

"Now ain't she, though? Why, she don't weigh half so much as either of my brown babies did."

"And is she not very delicate, too?" inquired the young lady.

"Delicate! Oh, don't talk! Why, Miss Emolyn, they thought she was dead at first; but I begged and prayed the nurse to lay her close to my side, to see if my warmth wouldn't bring her to life. So the nurse laid her by me in the bed, instead of laying her out. It was dark in the room, and I couldn't see her well, but I hugged her up. The nurse had given me something to quiet me and put me to sleep; and though I tried my best to warm the baby, I know when I dropped off to sleep it was as cold as a stone; but what do you think, ma'am, but toward morning I was waked up by a pitiful little wailing and squirming at my bosom, and there was my baby, come to life. Now, Miss Emolyn, what do you think of that?"

"Oh, I think you must have been so overjoyed!"

"Oh, I was, Miss Emolyn! I was! So thankful, too! But, ah, how heartless I am to be talking about my own rejoicings when you are in such sorrow! But my joy did not last long, Miss Emolyn! News came of your terrible misfortune, and the shock of it throwed me back to that degree I was in the hospital six weeks, and am only just out, and I have come to see you, before going home. Oh, Miss Emolyn, I needn't tell you that

I know you are as innocent as this baby! But how did it all happen, my lamb?"

"Oh, I don't know! I never knew! I only know that what happened to me was the very opposite to what happened to you! You folded your still-born child to your bosom and warmed it back to life, and went to sleep, and woke to find it living. I laid my living child beside me, fell asleep, and woke to find it dead—strangled! And they say I did it—they say I did it! And they put me here!" moaned Emolyn, in her tearless despair.

"Oh, my dear young lady! Do not look so dreadfully! I would rather see you weep. No matter what the crowner's quest said. Nobody believes you guilty! And as for me, Miss Emolyn, I am a poor woman, with no way of showing my love and honor to you but one way; and if I was a queen-mother, Miss Emolyn, with a kingdom at my back, I couldn't take a better than this—to name my innocent babe for you—to call her Emolyn!" murmured the woman.

"Oh, no, no, no! You must never do that! You would bring misfortune on the child!" cried the unhappy girl, in great bitterness of spirit.

"No, no, a blessing, I say, for I name her after an angel."

'You must not do it! You must not do it!" exclaimed Emolyn.

"But it is done, my lamb! The baby was christened by the chaplain of the hospital last Sunday, and she is registered in the book as Emolyn Wyndeworth Palmer. Kiss my little 'Em.,' your little, blue-eyed namesake, Miss Emolyn, and let us go; for the turnkey said I was not to stay but twenty minutes."

The most unhappy girl raised the babe and pressed

it to her heart, and pressed her lips upon its face, and then the frozen eyes were melted and rained in tears.

"Oh!" she breathed, "as I press this babe to my bosom, she draws all the fever and soreness from my heart! But does *she* take it? Ah, Heaven forbid! But this is another baptism, a baptism of tears, my little Em! Take her! Take her, Susan Palmer! I should but bring evil on the blue-eyed angel!" she added, bitterly, as she returned the child to the arms of its mother.

Not too soon. The warder unlocked the cell door. Mrs. Palmer raised the hand of her benefactress to her lips, and then, breathing blessings, left the room.

"You stayed too long," said the warder gruffly, as he relocked the door. "Do you think a man has got nothing else to do but to stand here and wait for you?"

Susan Palmer did not answer him, but, with the baby in her arms, followed where he led to the outlet of the prison.

Later that day, Mr. Abbot, Emolyn's senior counsel, called to see her, to tell her that her trial was fixed for the following Monday. During his visit he again took occasion to implore Emolyn to strengthen his hands for her defense by giving him her full confidence, and especially by revealing to him the name of her husband, the father of her child.

"I cannot prove that I ever had a husband," was the despairing response. "My husband is dead. The priest who married us is dead. My marriage certificate, with all the letters that passed between my husband and myself, has been stolen by some enemy, and probably destroyed. Nevertheless, if my child had lived, and I had not been subjected to the deep degradation of this charge, for her sake, I would have taken her in my arms and carried her to my deceased husband's father, and

told him my whole story. He has known me from childhood, and I think he would have believed and sustained me! But now my child is taken from me. I suffer under the deep dishonor of a criminal charge, and nothing shall unseal my lips on that subject! I will not bring reproach on the memory of my poor boy, nor on the name of his good father."

This was Emolyn's ultimatum, and no arguments or persuasions could move her from it.

The day of the great trial came. From an early hour in the morning the court-yard was filled and the court-house surrounded by a vast multitude of people waiting for the doors to be opened, that they might press in.

At eight o'clock Dr. Willet and Mr. Berners visited the prison for the purpose of preparing Emolyn to go to court, and of accompanying her thither.

They found that the girl had already risen, dressed and breakfasted.

She was clothed in deep mourning, and looked deadly pale, while she trembled as if ague-stricken.

Dr. Willet administered a powerful tonic sedative, while Mr. Berners said:

"Fear nothing, my child. Rejoice rather that the hour of your deliverance is so near at hand. Bear up through the ordeal which shall soon vindicate and free you."

Thus ministered unto, in both mind and body, supported and comforted by two such strong friends as Dr. Willet and Mr. Berners, Emolyn Wyndeworth, with some fortitude and calmness, yielded herself to the custody of the sheriff, who came to take her to the court.

"Keep your vail down, my dear, and do not raise it until you are required to do so," whispered Mr. Berners, as he and Dr. Willet followed Emolyn and the sheriff.

Emolyn, who never wore a vail before, because she

loved the air and sunshine, had from a habit let her long, crape vail hang behind her bonnet. Now, at her guardian's direction, she drew it over her face.

They left the prison by a side door, crossed the yard, passed through a side gate communicating with the court-yard, crossed that and entered a back door leading through a short passage directly to the sheriff's room.

"I have brought her this way," said sheriff Waller to his companions, "so that we may not be annoyed by the curiosity of the crowd. This door communicates directly with the court-room, near the judge's bench, so that we may enter without disturbance."

And so saying, the sheriff opened the door and led his prisoner into the court.

The room was crowded to suffocation. A sea of heads surged up from the staircases, lobbies, and aisles to the very railing separating the audience from the bar.

How did this multitude know that the black-robed, black vailed little being who entered from the sheriff's room, attended by three clerical-looking gentlemen, was the accused prisoner whose trial was to commence that day?

No one could answer that question satisfactorily; but it is certain that as soon as Emolyn and her escort entered a buzz of conversation passed through the whole assembly.

Emolyn was accommodated with a seat at the table with her counsel, Messrs. Abbot and Banks.

Judge Orr being on the bench, the crier proceeded to open the court. The proceedings commenced. A jury was quickly empannelled, for though all who were personally acquainted with Emolyn Wyndeworth certainly believed in her innocence, the world at large were too thoroughly bewildered by the circumstances of

the case to have formed an opinion that would have unfitted any individual belonging to it from serving as an impartial juror.

The jurors having been sworn in and having taken their seats, the clerk of arraigns arose and read the indictment charging Emolyn Wyndeworth with the murder of her infant child.

This document, so made up of legal phrases and "vain repetitions," was, fortunately for her, almost unintelligible to Emolyn.

But when the clerk of the arraigns directed her to rise and answer to the question:

"Prisoner at the bar, are you guilty or not guilty of this felony wherewith you stand indicted?" she answered, rather informally:

"I am not. I never hurt my poor little child. I never could have done so. I would have died first. No, sir, I am not guilty. As I hope for salvation, I am not."

When asked how she would be tried, she answered, again childishly and simply:

"In any way you please." But then being prompted by her counsel, she added: "By God and my country."

And then she dropped, half fainting, into her seat.

The district-attorney took the indictment from the hands of the clerk and proceeded to open it.

This district-attorney, Keyworth, was a great thunderer, a terror of evil-doers, the horror of the defense, always noted for the severity and success with which he prosecuted capital criminals to conviction and death. A tall, stern men he was, with gaunt features, looking as if they had been carved out of oak, and framed in bristling, iron-gray hair and beard. Not unlike the portraits of Old Hickory he looked.

He held the indictment in his hand and was getting

up his electricity for a grand display of thunder and lightning; but when his eyes fell on Emolyn Wyndeworth's pure, sweet, infantile face, the scathing words died on his lips, the prosecuting spirit fled from him. Should he pursue this child to death?—this child, probably the unconscious destroyer of her child, and possibly quite innocent? No! For once the thunderer was merciful. He did no more than his duty obliged him to do. He merely opened the indictment by referring to its text and then telling the jury, in plain words, what that document had already told them in puzzling ones.

The short, cold opening speech ended, Mr. Keyworth proceeded to call his witnesses.

The first one summoned was Mrs. Malvina Warde, who, being sworn, testified to the facts, with which the reader is already acquainted, concerning her discovery of the strangled child, by the side of the newly-made mother, the prisoner at the bar. Mrs. Warde would have gone on and told a long and damaging story of the misdemeanors of Emolyn Wyndeworth, had she not been peremptorily stopped by the bench and requested to keep to the point at issue. That point was so very small, and there was so very little more to be said about it that the witness soon got through, and after a short cross-examination by the defense, she was permitted to retire.

She sat down, muttering to a stranger who occupied the seat next her own:

"They are all biased in favor of this girl; but, if a women be only very young and fair, she may do what she pleases without risk of punishment."

Dr. Willet was the next witness called to the stand and most unwillingly testified to having been called on the first of May last to attend the prisoner, who had been recently confined, and to examine the child, whom he found dead beside the mother; also to having on the

same day made a post-mortem examination of the body of the babe, and discovered that it had died of strangulation.

Cross-examined by Mr. Abbot, of the defense, he testified that it was a matter of medical experience that mothers in the prisoner's late distressing circumstances were frequently subjects of temporary but very decided insanity, during the paroxysms of which they could not be held morally responsible for their acts.

The third witness sworn was Charles Clermont, the druggist, who testified that on the 29th of April, in the dusk of the evening, the prisoner at the bar had come to him to purchase an ounce of laudanum, saying that she wanted it to soothe a pain and put her to sleep; but there was something in her manner that assured him she meditated suicide. He was afraid to refuse to sell her the laudanum, lest she should go and buy it somewhere else and destroy herself; so he gave her an ounce of licorice water with a half a dram of laudanum in it; this, he thought, was a dose safe to put her to sleep, and safe also to let her awake. He had never seen his customer again until he recognized her as the prisoner at the bar."

As the testimony of this witness was unimportant, he was permitted to retire without cross-examination.

District Attorney Keyworth now arose and said that the prosecution would rest the case here.

Mr. Abbot arose for the defense. He commenced by stigmatizing the verdict of the coroner's jury, charging Emolyn Wyndeworth with the death of her infant, as a gross blunder, only to be approached in fatuity by the deplorable mistake of the grand jury in indicting so mere a child for so heinous a crime. He would undertake to make her innocence as clear as day. He said that, in the first place, the known character and ante-

cedents of his youthful client forbade the probability that she could ever have been guilty of so atrocious an act as the willful murder of her own babe ; that besides, if she had been the most depraved and unprincipled of women and the most heartless and cruel of mothers, she had no motive, no incentive to the destruction of her own child ; that she was not a frail girl, as some who did not know her might suspect ; that she was, on the contrary, the youthful widow of a young man, who, for reasons, had made her his wife by a secret marriage, but had since died : that, if her child had lived, she would have sought out the father of her late husband and revealed her marriage to him ; but that, since the death of her child and the dreadful injustice of her arraignment on the charge of its murder, his client had determined to seal her lips with silence, lest some of the reproach of her trial should be reflected on the memory of her young husband and the name of his family. He had in vain besought her to make the revelation that would vindicate her fair fame ; she had steadily refused to do so, for the reasons already stated. He had, therefore, no legal proof of the story he now told the jury ; but if they were, or should be, inclined to doubt its truth, let them look in the face of his client for its confirmation.

He then proceeded to call witnesses for the defense. The first one summoned was Commander Bruce.

On hearing his name called, the young prisoner, who had not known of his presence in the city, but who had believed him to be at sea, started, turned deadly pale, and seemed on the very verge of fainting.

She was told to lift up her vail. She did so ; but cast down her eyes.

The witness, being sworn, was directed to look at the prisoner, and asked if he recognized her.

"I do. I have known her, Emolyn Wyndeworth, from her infancy up to a few months ago, when I sailed for Rio de Janeiro; from which port I have just returned," answered the commander, in a voice broken by strong emotion.

Then, being examined by Mr. Abbot, he testified to the uniform conscientiousness, benevolence and piety of the accused. He dwelt upon the purity, tenderness, and compassion of her heart; the active charity of her life. He would have made a speech in her defense had he been permitted to do so. But he was allowed to retire without any cross-examination.

Other old friends of the family, who had been intimately acquainted with Emolyn Wyndeworth in the days of her uncle, were examined, and testified in turn to the unblemished character and reputation of the accused.

And then followed Susan Palmer and a number of the poor whom Emolyn had succored from her childhood up. These, with tearful eyes and broken voices, testified to the unvarying truthfulness of her mind, tenderness of her heart, and helpfulness of her hands.

With the examination of the last of these witnesses the defense rested their case.

The judge summed up in a very few words, going over and condensing the evidence for the prosecution and for the defense, and reminding the jury that, where a doubt existed, that doubt was to be for the benefit of the prisoner.

The jury, in charge of two officers of the court, then left the room to deliberate on their verdict.

Emolyn, no longer able to bear up under the awful pressure of her circumstances, sunk back half swooning in her chair. Dr. Willet and Mrs. Palmer were at her

side in an instant. Susan Palmer applied smelling-salts to her nostrils, while Dr. Willet felt her pulse.

Mr. Berners had hurried from the room, but soon reappeared with a glass of wine in his hand, which he brought to the prisoner and compelled her to drink.

Just then there was a little stir in one corner of the court-room, followed by a murmur throughout the assembly.

The cause was soon apparent. The jury were re-entering the court.

The crier called for silence, and the crowd became quiet.

The jury paused in a group before the bench.

"Gentlemen of the jury, have you agreed upon your verdict?" demanded the clerk of arraigns.

"We have agreed," answered the foreman, for his colleagues.

"Prisoner at the bar, stand up and look upon the jury."

Dr. Willet raised Emolyn to her feet and supported her trembling form.

"Gentlemen of the jury, look upon the prisoner. How say you now, do you find Emolyn Wyndeworth guilty, or not guilty, of the felony for which she stands indicted?"

"NOT GUILTY," responded the foreman.

The silence of the multitude was broken by an irrepressible murmur of approval.

"What is it? Oh, what is it?" panted Emolyn, in an expiring voice.

"You are free, my child! You are vindicated!" exclaimed Dr. Willet, while Mr. Berners and Commander Bruce caught each a hand of hers, crying, the one:

"Oh, thank God!"

And the other:

"I wish you joy!"

## CHAPTER XVII.

### VINDICATED.

Oh friends there was a time
I could have heard such sounds with lively joy:
But now it comes too late!
Give blind ones beauty; music to the deaf:
Give prosperous winds to ships that have no sails;
Their joys will be like mine. FANE.

"The prisoner is discharged from custody. The court is adjourned."

"Come, my love. You are free. You are vindicated. Come with me."

"Heaven bless you, my child. May all your future days be days of pleasantness and peace."

"Oh, my darling young lady, won't you only look up and speak to your poor friend? Sure, no one in the land is more rejoiced and thankful at your acquittal than Susan Palmer is."

All these words, from the judge, from the doctor, from the lawyer, and from the poor woman who had been the object of her bounty, fell upon the dulled ears of Emolyn like sounds from some far-off scene, in which she had no personal interest.

Gathering closer around her, they saw that she was unconscious of them. She had fainted where she sat.

Dr. Willet lifted her in his arms as if she had been an

infant, and bore her into the marshal's room, and laid her on the sofa, and applied restoratives.

"She bore up wonderfully through the terrible ordeal of the trial. It is no wonder that she succumbs now," said Mr. Berners, as he stood by the sofa watching the efforts of the physician to recover her.

"No wonder indeed, poor lamb," sobbed Mrs. Palmer, who knelt by the side of the swooning girl, diligently rubbing her cold hands.

These endeavors were soon successful, and Emolyn heaved a deep sigh and opened her eyes.

At first she looked around in confusion, and then seeing her friends standing near her, bending over her, she murmured the question :

"What has happened ?"

"You are acquitted, you are vindicated, my dear child," answered Mr. Berners.

"Thank Heaven !" she murmured, but very low, and without a sign of triumph in her plaintive tones and pale face.

"You had better get her away as soon as possible, Mr. Berners," said Dr. Willet.

"Come, my child, cheer up. Come home with me now," said her guardian, taking her hand to lift her from the sofa.

Emolyn obeyed the impulse given her, and sat up.

Mrs. Palmer replaced the hat that had been lifted from her head when she had been laid on the sofa.

Dr. Willet put a small bottle of smelling salts in her hand.

Then drawing one of her arms in his own, he led her out through the same side door by which they had entered, and placed her in a carriage which the care of Mr. Berners had caused to be brought up and kept in waiting there.

He had wished to avoid the curious, gaping and gazing crowd that had collected in front of the court to see the discharged prisoner come out.

He was only partially successful. Some suspicion of this intended evasion of them had crept among the people, so that while many watched the front entrance, many more came around to the side to wait for the expected sight. When Emolyn, leaning on the arm of her guardian, issued through the side door, her appearance was greeted by the rude gaze of many eyes, and the free comments of as many lips.

"Oh, hurry me in! Hurry me in!" she panted, turning her face and hiding it on the shoulder of her guardian.

Mr. Berners caught her up hastily, and placed her in the carriage. Then he entered and seated himself beside her. Dr. Willet was about to follow, when his arm was touched. He turned quickly and somewhat angrily, but he quieted down on seeing a fine soldierly-looking, gray-bearded man, whom he recognized as Commander Bruce.

"For Heaven's sake, Doctor, let me speak to my old friend's child! I strove to keep near her after the verdict, but failed, when she left the court-room. I thought you would bring her out by this private door, so I came here to wait. How is she?" hastily demanded the commander.

"Ill enough; yet wonderfully well, under the circumstances; so I hope you will understand, and pardon me if I beg you to say as little as possible to her," replied Dr. Willet.

"Only a word," said Commander Bruce, pushing his way to the open door of the carriage, while the buzzing voices of the crowd became more noisy than ever.

"How do you do, Mr. Berners? I wish to speak to

your young ward. Emolyn, my dear child, I only wish to tell you how much I rejoice at your acquittal, and to say that if you ever need a friend in this world, you will find one in old Leonidas Bruce. The Lord bless you, my dear!" he said, as he took her hand and carried it to his lips, with old-fashioned gallantry.

She tried to thank him; she struggled to speak; but only inarticulate sounds came from her white lips. She gasped, covered her face with her hands, and sank back in her corner.

"She is quite unnerved," whispered Mr. Berners.

"I see! I see! Poor girl! Poor girl! Well, Emolyn, my dear, I will not detain you now. Once more, good-by, and the Lord bless you!" said the old sailor. Then, with a nod to Mr. Berners and Dr. Willet, he turned away and mixed himself with the elbowing and pushing crowd.

"Where shall I tell him to drive?" inquired Dr. Willet, with his hand on the door.

"To the avenue, where we will give him other directions," whispered Mr. Berners.

Dr. Willet gave the order in a low tone, and then sprang into the carriage, closed the door, and took his seat.

"Now, where do you intend to take her?" inquired Dr. Willet, in a voice which, low as it was, was overheard by Emolyn, who panted, gasped, and brokenly uttered the words:

"Oh, take me away!—away!—from all these people!—from all who know me!—far away! where I shall never be heard of more!"

"Compose yourself, dear child. I will convey you to some sweet, silent retreat in the country—to my own quiet home and kind-hearted sisters, perhaps," began

Mr. Berners, but he was interrupted by Emolyn, wildly exclaiming :

"Oh, no, no, no ! not there ! not to them ! They know me and my trouble. Oh, take me where no one knows anything about me ! where I shall never be heard of again !"

"Very well, I will do so, my child. And from this moment I will begin to hide and shield you from cruel eyes," said Mr. Berners.

The hack rolled on and entered upon the avenue. When they had reached the most crowded part of that populous thoroughfare, Mr. Berners pulled the check-string and stopped the carriage.

"Dr. Willet, be so very kind as to pay and discharge the driver, and then join us farther up the street. We must first lose ourselves in this new crowd, who have not even heard of the verdict yet and do not know us," said Mr. Berners, as he placed his pocket-book in the hands of the doctor, and assisted his vailed charge to alight.

They walked on unnoticed among the passengers of the sidewalk, keeping silence, until they were joined by Dr. Willet, when Mr. Berners said :

"We will go to the next hack-stand and get a fresh hack, whose driver will not recognize us, and then, Dr. Willet, we will bid you good-by. I shall take my ward across the river into Virginia and onward to Dranesville, an obscure village, about twenty miles from the city. Then, I am sure, that you will perform for me these good offices : to go to the prison and claim her effects, put them in charge of Melpomene, and send the woman on by a private conveyance this very night. Emolyn will need her maid and her clothing immediately. Do you think you can do this without inconvenience ?"

"Yes, certainly, and with great pleasure," cordially responded Dr. Willet.

"I need not ask you to caution Melpomene not to speak of her mistress at all; but when necessary, to speak of me as—'Master Lewis?'"

"I shall warn her to be very careful."

"We shall live very quietly at the little hotel in the hamlet, until Emolyn has recovered her strength and calmness, and then I will take her to Europe for a long tour."

"And after that?" inquired the doctor.

"'After that,'—I don't know," responded Mr. Berners, slowly and thoughtfully.

By this time they had approached a hack-stand.

Dr. Willet surveyed the group of carriages until he fixed upon one whose horses seemed strong and fresh, then he signalled the driver, who touched his hat and drove up.

"Are your horses good for a long drive?" inquired Mr. Berners.

"Yes, sir. They haven't been out to-day, sir. Fresh pair, just fotch from the stable, sir," answered the driver.

"Very well. I will engage it."

The driver jumped down from his box and opened the door.

Mr. Berners lifted his weary companion and seated her on the back cushion. Then he turned and said to the doctor.

"Now I think of it, our way lies directly past your house. Pray get in and give us your company as long as possible."

"Thanks; but you seem to forget I have a commission which requires me to go in an opposite direction," answered the doctor.

"Oh! ay! certainly. Well, then, I will bid you good-by here, though with much regret," replied Mr Berners.

"Good-by! good-by!" exclaimed the doctor, heartily shaking the hand of his friend. Then putting his head in at the carriage door, he took Emolyn's slender fingers within his own, and whispered, earnestly:

"Farewell, my dear child. My most fervent prayers will go up daily for your happiness. I do not presume to think that you will ever need a friend while Lewis Berners lives, but if ever you should, you know where to look for one who would go through fire and water for you.'

"Oh, I do! I do indeed!" earnestly replied Emolyn.

The doctor kissed her hand and gave way to Mr. Berners, who entered the carriage and seated himself beside Emolyn.

Then Dr. Willet shook hands with Lewis Berners, closed the door, and gave the order:

"To the long bridge."

The carriage drove off rapidly in one direction, while the doctor walked away in another.

He bent his steps towards the prison. He was a good pedestrian, and a rapid walk of twenty minutes brought him to the prison just before the hour of closing, which was always at sunset.

Melpomene, who had been sent from the court-room to her mistress's cell to gather and pack up the personal effects left there, was now waiting in the passage, seated on a large travelling trunk.

"I have come to carry you away from this and send you to your mistress," said the doctor, as soon as the warder on duty had admitted him.

"And, indeed, sir I am mighty glad to hear it, which I do hope as I shall never see sich a forsaken place

again as long as I have to live in this world," replied the woman.

The doctor was looking at the great travelling trunk in much perplexity.

"If you want that carried anywheres, sir, me and Jim will be off duty at six o'clock, and we'll take it away for you," said one of the warders.

"I thank you, my friend. It is six now. Can you carry it out at once?" inquired the doctor.

The man glanced up at the hall clock before he trusted himself to answer.

The clock began to strike the hour.

"Yes, sir—we can carry it now. Come, Jim."

A strong-looking, red-headed lad answered the summons by taking hold of one handle of the trunk, while the warder took the other. Between them they carried it out.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### TO THE WILDERNESS.

"Where, far from all these voices, there is peace."
TENNYSON.

"Where shall I carry it, sir?" inquired the warder, when they had passed the outer gate of the prison.

The doctor looked up and down the street before replying.

There was no passer-by in sight to discover where that trunk had come from.

"Take it across the street and set it down on the pavement before that large boarding-house," said Dr

Willet, walking on to lead the way, followed by Melpomene and the men with the trunk.

"Set it down here," said the doctor, indicating the spot.

The men deposited their burden.

The doctor took out his pocket-book and paid them liberally.

When they had thanked him and gone, the doctor turned to the woman and briefly explained what was expected of her, adding:

"We will wait here until we see some of the carts coming home from their work on the public roads, which they will presently be doing, as it is now after six o'clock. Then we will hail one, and I will put you and the trunk on it, and have you taken down to the marsh market. I shall walk and get there as soon as you will. There we shall be sure to find some of the country people with their wagons going home from market to Dranesville. I will put you and the trunk on one of these, and send you on to your mistress. You can tell her, when you see her, that if she and her guardian will send me a written order to do so, I will go to Green Point and take all her effects away, and send them to Mr. Berner's from my house. Do you uuderstand?"

"Oh, yes, sir; but, laws, sir, poor Miss Emolyn haven't got anything there worth the paring of your nails, sir. Since old master died she had no money to buy her own necessaries, or to give to the poor; so she had to sell all the jewelry and finery she could spare to get herself shoes, and hose, and medicine, and such things, until Master Lewis came, sir. But I'll tell her all the same," respectfully answered the woman.

"There's a cart!" exclaimed Dr. Willet, and he suddenly raised his umbrella and signalled the carter, who immediately pulled up and touched his hat.

"Can you take this woman and trunk down to the marsh market?"

"Well, I *might*, sir," replied the man, hesitating and rubbing his forehead.

"I will give you two dollars for the job," said Dr. Willet.

"Thank'y, sir. I'll do it!" promptly exclaimed the man, jumping from his seat and laying hold of the trunk.

Dr. Willet helped him, and between them they put it on the cart.

"Come, my good woman, look sharp!" said the man, as he took Melpomene's hand and hoisted her into the cart.

"Go on; I will walk," said the doctor.

The man took his seat and started his horse, who, tired with the day's work, travelled but slowly.

The doctor keeping to the sidewalk, easily kept up with them.

It took them quite half-an-hour to reach the marsh market.

The market hours were over, and the hucksters and farmers were already loading up their wagons with the produce left over from their sales to return home.

The doctor told the cartman to pull up and wait for a few moments, until he could find a conveyance for the woman.

He went around among the market men inquiring for any wagon that might be going to Dranesville, and finally he discovered a farmer who was about to start home in his wagon, to his farm, a mile beyond that village. He agreed to convey the woman and the trunk as far as the Red-Fox Tavern, the only hotel in the place; but with the quaint generosity of his class and country, refused all compensation for an act of courtesy. He helped the cartman to transfer the trunk from the

cart to the wagon; then handed Melpomene to her seat on the same, climbed to his own place, touched his hat to the doctor and drove off.

Dr. Willet paid the cartman, and then, as the sun had set, he turned and walked rapidly home, where he found his wife and family rejoicing over the verdict which had acquitted Emolyn Wyndeworth.

But not to every household interested in that trial did the news of the verdict bring rejoicing. To Mrs. Warde, at Green Point, it brought the bitterest disappointment.

If observation and experience did not teach us and show us into what beasts and demons ambition and avarice transform men and women, we should deem it incredible that any human spirit should be so deeply sunk into the idiocy of the love of self and of the world as to desire the sacrifice of another, by a cruel and ignominious death, for the sake of selfish advancement, as Mrs. Warde desired and planned the immolation of the innocent young creature who stood between her and the inheritance of Wynde Slopes.

But the verdict of acquittal had defeated all her plans. She had committed crime fruitlessly. She had loaded her soul with sin in vain. She carried about with her the burden of a guilty conscience, without even the poor compensation of success in her schemes.

And now, on this afternoon of the rendering of the verdict, as she walked up and down the floor of her room, raging inwardly like a lioness in her cage, her thoughts ran in this wise:

"So she is acquitted! Yes, and vindicated with *éclat!* She has gone away with her guardian, Lewis Berners. In two years she will be mistress of Wynde Slopes, the fair estate for which I have lost my soul in vain! I hate her! I hate her! I hate her! Yes, I hate her for standing between me and my just inheri-

tance! I hate her because her position tempted me to fruitless crime! I hate her for my failure and for her triumph! *Oh!* how I hate Emolyn Wyndeworth! I will pursue and destroy her yet! I will! I will! I will!"

In the fierce strength of her rage, she ground her teeth together as if she would have ground them to powder, and clenched her fists till her nails drew blood from the palms of her hands.

Her fury was interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Come in!" she sternly exclaimed.

Old Monica entered the room.

"What do you want?" she sharply demanded.

"If you please, ma'am, we, dem culled people down de kitchen, hab heerd how our Miss Em'lyn is 'quitted, and I come to ast you whedder I must 'pare her room for her," said the old woman, courtesying.

"Prepare a room for *her?*" exclaimed Mrs. Warde, darkly frowning. "Prepare a room for that murderess? Do you dare to suppose that I shall take such a guilty and dishonored wretch back into my house?"

"Only I thought, as the court had 'quitted her, ma'am," humbly suggested Monica.

"*Acquitted* her!" mocked Mrs. Warde, with bitter irony. "Acquitted her! Yes, acquitted her, from their weak compassion for her youth—not knowing her *old age* in sin! Leave the room, and don't dare to mention the name of that girl in this house again!"

"If you please ma'am—"

"SILENCE, I say! and begone!"

"I was only gwine to say as Ann Whitlock were down in the kitchen a wantin' to see you very particular," persevered the woman.

"Ann Whitlock! Mrs. Whitlock, the nurse from the

hospital, you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Warde, with a sudden change of color.

"Yes, ma'am, her."

"Send her up to me. Wants some assistance, I suppose," continued the lady, by way of explaining the visit that caused her some inward disturbance.

Old Monica left the room, and Mrs. Warde walked up and down the floor more uneasily than before.

"What can that blundering idiot want now? It is the curse of those who have to deal with such dull brutes that they can never feel sure of them, never feel safe with them!" she muttered to herself.

The door opened, and Mrs. Whitlock entered, red-eyed, bloated, whimpering, maudlin.

"Ah! you are a cheering and encouraging subject!" said Mrs. Warde to herself. Then aloud—"Sit down, Whitlock, and tell me what you want."

"Oh! ma'am," whined the woman, "sure I'm turned out iv my situation at the hospital!"

"Well, I should think you would be—looking at you! But tell me why you were turned out."

"Oh! dear ma'am, ever since that night—that dreadful, horrid, awful night—"

Mrs. Warde frowned darkly and threateningly; but the nurse, who was not looking at her, continued:

"I have been that low-spirited and heavy-hearted that I have had to take a dhrop of the crayture, now and again, just to keep the life intil me. And so they did make that a cause iv complaint ag'in me, ma'am, and, be raison av the confusion that was in it, they turned me off this very morning," whimpered the woman.

"And what do you want me to do?" sarcastically inquired Mrs. Warde.

"Sure, to ricommind me to another situation, or to give me the manes of living, till I get one meself!"

"And I am to recommend you as a *sober* and trustworthy person?" sneered Malvina Warde.

"Ah, sure, ma'am, ye'll not be casting that same in my teeth when I tell you it was all along that horrid, awful, terrible night's work as lays so heavy on my soul!"

"BE SILENT, WOMAN!" sternly exclaimed Mrs. Warde. "Never *speak* of that night's work again! Never even *allude* to it again! No! never so much as *harbor a thought* of it, if you can help it!"

"I don't want to, ma'am, which is the raison why I thry to dhrive it out with the dhrink."

"Listen to me now! You know that six months ago I could have put you in prison for theft, do you not?"

"Oh, ma'am, you'd never a done the likes of that to a poor crayture like meself," whined the nurse, shuddering and collapsing.

"I should have done so if you had not served my turn," grimly replied the lady.

"But I did serve it, ma'am. I did serve it faithful!"

"*You did!* and so now I could send you to the gallows for murder!"

The wretched woman shrieked, and covered her face with her hands.

Malvina Warde continued ruthlessly:

"That child was proven to have been strangled! The jury has acquitted Emolyn Wyndeworth of the child's death. *You* were the only other woman in the room that night!"

"The child was born dead! Oh, it was indeed, ma'am!" sobbed the terrified woman.

"Convince a jury of that!" sneered Mrs. Warde.

"But I *couldn't* a hurt a little baby, ma'am, no! not even

to please you and save me from going to prison! Bad as I am, I couldn't a done that same!" persisted the woman.

"Convince a jury of that!" repeated Mrs. Warde.

The nurse burst into hysterical sobs and tears, muttering to herself:

"I have sold my soul to the devil, and the more I try to get free, the more I fall into the pit."

"Now compose yourself, and listen to me, Mrs. Whitlock. If you follow my directions and obey my will you shall be free and prosperous. If you do not—you know the consequences. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, ma'am," sighed the woman.

"Very well. Go now and find a room for yourself in this neighborhood. Let me know when you have secured it, and I will send enough of old furniture from the house here to fit it up. Then I will pay you a small stipend a week to keep you. And this is what you must do. You must find Emolyn Wyndeworth."

"Sure, that will be aisy enough, ma'am, for she will be in the city with the gardeen."

"Not so! The evening papers say that she is supposed to have left the city, and no one knows whither she has gone. The reporters are at fault. Now, of course I know, Mrs. Whitlock, that you will not prove a very intelligent detective, nor shall I expect you to find the 'clew to her secret hiding-place;' but *I* shall seek traces of her, and when I find them, I shall put the clews in your hands, and expect you to follow them until you hunt her down."

"And if I do, what then, ma'am?"

"Then I shall give you further instructions. Go now and look for your room."

The wretched woman got up, nodded to the lady

sighed and departed, muttering within her oppressed and confused mind :

"Sold to Satan ! Sold to Satan ! Oh, I wish both my hands had been scalded before I ever tetched them jewels, which I do b'lieve she left in my way o' purpose to tempt me to take 'em, and that a way to get me in her power and make me do things as she is afeared to do herself, bad and bold as she is. Ah ! bad women *is* the devil, and she's one of 'em."

And so, groaning and sighing that her past peccadilloes had forced her on in the downward path that leads to deeper crime—to death and hell—the woman went on her evil mission. But first to find a room as a place from which to act. She bent her steps towards the poorest section of the neighborhood, where the humblest lodgings might be found.

She went up one street and down another, until she came to a narrow alley, where a slip of a sign-board bore the inscription, " Laundress Lane."

The place hardly needed the sign. The alley was built up on each side with small, irregular houses of different sizes, materials and colors—some being of red brick, some of painted wood, some two stories high and some only one. But they were all alike in this particular, that they had not a foot of front yard, but opened directly upon the street, if the long and narrow marsh, or gutter, receptacle of all the soap-suds of Laundress Lane, could be called a street. From the roofs of the houses on either side lines were stretched, filled with the clothes that had been washed out that day and were now dripping and drying.

Even on the sunniest day there was always an atmosphere of dripping dampness in Laundress Lane.

"Law ! No wonder the people here are, one or

another, everlasting in the hospital!" muttered Mrs. Whitlock, sneezing, as she turned into the lane.

She picked her way through the sloppy thoroughfare, looking from side to side on the squalid houses until she came to one little two-storied dwelling on the right hand, whose whitewashed walls, clear windows, and clean doorstep formed a creditable contrast to the other buildings.

Beside the neatly-painted door a well-written card hung, bearing the sign :

FINE WASHING AND FLUTING.
*A Room to Let.*

Ann Whitlock rapped at the door with her fist, there being neither bell nor knocker attached to this humble portal.

The door was immediately opened, and Susan Palmer appeared.

Each woman started on seeing the other.

Mrs. Whitlock was the first to speak :

"Faix, Mrs. Palmer, I didn't know as you lived here!" she exclaimed, and she impatiently turned as if to run away.

"Oh, come in! Come in, *do*, please. I haven't seen you since I left the hospital, two weeks ago a Monday, but I never should forget, if I live to be a hundred, how good you were to me and the baby," said kindly Susan Palmer, pulling the accidental visitor into the house, and popping her down in a chair.

"But I didn't know *you* was a living here. I was only a looking for lodgings," said the ex-nurse, deprecatingly,

"Well, but I *do* live here, and you shall have the room before any one else in the world, and cheaper too, and

when it ain't convenient for you to pay the rent you sha'n't be worritted on that account, for I never shall forget how good you were to me and the baby in the hospital. Why, Mrs. Whitlock, I do perfectly believe if it hadn't a been for you, that baby would a died! Why, didn't the doctor say as it were born dead and couldn't be resuspirated? But you was good to me and let me take my poor, little, cold baby on my warm bosom in the bed, and that's what brought her to, for I know when I fell asleep with her in my arms she seemed dead, and when I woke up she was alive, and sniffing and nestling to find her milk. Now, I know, and so do you, if she had been laid out on the cooling-board, she'd a died, sure enough."

"So she would," muttered the nurse.

"It was through you she wasn't laid there. You saved her life, Mrs. Whitlock, and thankful I shall always be to you."

"Oommee," groaned the woman, "are you so thankful as that child lived when you have so many other mouths to feed?"

"Thankful! Ah! only the Lord knows how grateful the mother is when her child is saved," said Susan Palmer, while the tears that sprang to her eyes attested the truthfulness of her words.

"And your husband, thin, Mr. Palmer, mightn't he a been just as well pleased if this child had been taken away where it would a been better off than it is here? Don't he feel as if he had children enough already?"

"Who, *John?*—Lord bless his dear old heart—no. The more children we have, the better he likes 'em. I do b'lieve if I was to give him two babies every year, instead of one, he'd always think the last one was the sweetest and purtiest and loveliest of the lot. That's

my husband, Heaven bless him! Hard work don't hurt him; but when a child is taken from us—and oh! so many have been taken—it breaks his heart."

"And so, thin, you are both av you pleased to have this baby?"

"'Pleased!' Oh, don't mention it! 'Pleased!' Why, we are delighted. And as for John, why, when he's in the house, the baby's hardly ever out of his arms. You see she is so different from all the other children! She has such delicate features, and such a fair skin, and such heavenly blue eyes! He just *dotes* on her, and she on him."

"Well, I am glad *somebody's* happy in it, anyhow."

"Ah! I am happy *all through* this evening. I have just heard of my dear Miss Emolyn's acquittal. (I don't know her married name, although I am sure she *is* married.) You used to know her when you were helping to take care of old Captain Wyndeworth at Green Point; and you must remember how good she was to everybody. There was nothing she wouldn't do for the poor, either in giving them things, or in lending them books, or doing any kind of work for them that they couldn't do. Why she even wrote that sign for me that you saw hanging over the door. You must have seen how good she was."

"I didn't see much of her while I was at Green Point," said the visitor, in a low voice.

"Oh, then, that was because you had to stay in the old captain's room, which she was hardly ever let to enter. But anyway, ain't you glad that she is freed?"

"Glad!" exclaimed the strange woman, breaking into energy. "Glad ain't no word for it! I'm as thankful as if it was myself as was set free! for I tell you now the truth, if that gal had suffered death I should a dhrank myself into my grave, for I couldn't a

stood it! Why honey, let me tell you one thing. I was so worked up about that gal's trial, that—I couldn't help it—I took more liquor than was good for me, and so to-day the head matron turned me out iv my place."

"I am very sorry to hear that, but you know liquor never helps anything. It always makes everything worse. But never mind that now. I will let you have the room up stairs, and I can get washing for you to do, and help you all I can; for I never shall forget you saved my baby's life."

Ann Whitlock sighed deeply, murmuring to herself:

"Well, in all this dreadful work, I'm glad as some one is pleased."

"When will you want to move in?" inquired Mrs. Palmer.

"To-morrow. A lady has promised to give me some old furniture, which I will fetch in the morning. But if you could give me a pallet in the empty room to-night, I'd be willing to pay you for it, for, to tell you the truth, since laving the hospital, I haven't got a home to go to."

"Surely, surely, you shall sleep in the best bed in the house, 'without money and without price,' for didn't you save my baby's life? So now take off your bonnet and make yourself easy. I have sent the children with the baby out for a walk in the Arsenal grounds, where it is dry and sunny. When they get back, and John comes from his work, then we will have tea."

"Faith!" sighed Ann Whitlock. "I'm glad in all this some one is pleased and happy."

## CHAPTER XIX.

THE WORKMAN'S HOME.

I know he's coming, by this sign:
That baby's almost wild!
See how she smiles and coos and starts,—
Heaven bless the loving child!
Laugh, baby, laugh! Stretch out thy hands,
Thy father on the threshold stands!

MARY HOWITT.

Susan Palmer took Ann Whitlock up a narrow flight of stairs, leading from the tiny parlor to the front chamber above.

This was a small room, looking down through two little windows into the lane below.

It contained no sort of furniture, except a large old arm-chair.

"This is the room as I have got to let, Mrs. Whitlock, which you are heartily welcome to it. Sit ye down in this easy-chair. It is a wonderful, restful chair, if it is old and ramshackley! I keep it up here, you see, 'cause I haven't got no room for it down stairs. So you're heartily welcome to *it*, too, for that matter. Sit ye down, dear woman, and give me your things, and I'll just hang 'em up in the closet."

"Oome! Ah!" sighed Ann Whitlock, as she sank in-

to the big, old chair, and took off her bonnet and shawl and handed them to her hostess.

Mrs. Palmer put them away in the little, narrow closet and then turned to her guest, saying:

"Now, I shall make you a comfortable bed down on the floor here, and to-morrow, when your furniture comes, I will help you to put it in order."

"Thanky, Susan Palmer; you're a kind-hearted creater and a deal kinder to me 'an I deserve," sighed the ex-nurse.

"Oh, no, no, no!" protested Mrs. Palmer. "I couldn't be."

"Yes you could, and you are! But now tell me, how much a month can you let me have this room for?"

"For your own price, my dear woman, and, for the matter of that, if you were never to pay me, I am sure I would never ask you for it! No, never! For, law, didn't you save my baby's life? The fool young doctors said it was dead, when it was only torpid and cold as a stone, and if you had listened to them and laid it out on a cooling board, it would have died sure enough! But you listened to me, though you did think it was only my whim, and you put the poor, little, stone-cold baby in my bed, and I cuddled it up to my warm bosom and warmed it back to life! Why, law, I shall never forget my feelings next morning when I was woke up by the baby, crying and wiggling and nestling at me as nat'ral as a young kitten! Ah! It was all through you that them fool young men didn't let my baby die! Yes, and it is owing to you that my baby is alive to-day! So you see, dear woman, I couldn't do too much for you, and no more could John, and he knows it too."

"Oome!" sighed Mrs. Whitlock, rubbing her knees.

"Now, I want you to sit in that deep, soft chair, until

you are well-rested, and by that time John and the young ones will be home, and we will have supper."

With these kindly words, good-hearted Susan Palmer tripped down stairs, leaving her guest alone.

Ann Whitlock was bad enough at her best, but she was not irreclaimably evil. She had been a thief; and though she had never deliberately meditated robbery, yet, under the strong temptation of necessity or opportunity, she could not resist the impulse to appropriate the property of others. She had been an inebriate; for she could not endure any pain of body or mind that she could drown in strong drink.

Yet notwithstanding these two detestable vices of dishonesty and intemperance, the poor creature was not wholly evil.

She was not bold, cruel or remorseless in her wickedness. On the contrary, she was the very opposite of all these. She was timid, tender-hearted and compunctious.

Had Mrs. Malvina Warde been a true discerner of spirits, she must have paused long before making such a soul her confederate in crime, even though she had already taken that soul in her toils by exposing it to the strong temptation under which it fell! By threats of prosecution and imprisonment, she had driven this weak soul on from crime to crime in her own demoniac service, yet she could not still within it the deep voice of conscience, which constantly made itself heard, and which one day might make itself obeyed.

Left alone in her bare chamber, the ex-hospital nurse leaned back in her old chair and sighed wearily.

"Let nobody never do nothing in this world as is a going to weigh heavy on their hearts," she muttered to herself. "They had better die and be done with it, so they had! But thanks be to goodness, things ain't half

so bad as they might a been, and as that there she-devil as has got me in her power, wanted 'em to be! Whenever I pray, 'deliver us from evil,' I think only 'deliver me from Madame Warde!' No, things ain't nothing like as bad as they might a been, and as she 'tended for them to be! That poor, dear, innocent gal is 'quitted by the jury! Law! if—if they had a 'demned that poor, innocent gal to death, I should a had to a 'fessed, even if I had been sent to prison! for what is prison compared to having of the death of an innocent gal on my conscience? But, the poor gal is 'quitted and gone away along of her good guardian to some city of refuge. So much for her. And as for the baby, why Susan and John Palmer is both a deal happier in gaining of this pretty, little, live baby than they would a been a grieving after that dead baby! And it *was* dead! dead as a stone! dead as a door nail! dead as Darius, King of Babylon! when this she-devil put the marks around its neck! But, oh, deary me! I end where I begun. Let nobody never do nothing that hangs heavy on their hearts. And now, by the bustle I hear down stairs, I reckon the children have come in, and so I'll just go down, and see *one* on 'em at least. And here I'll stay in this house and watch over that one, and do it all the good I can, as long as we both shall live."

With these words, Ann Whitlock went down stairs to the little parlor, which was empty, and on through that to the little back kitchen, which was full; for there was Susan Palmer, busy over a bright, little cooking stove, making tea and frying ham and eggs. And there were the two boys, John, aged twelve, and James, aged ten, and the two dark-eyed girls, Ann, aged eight, and Jane, aged six years—and there was the little, fair, blue-eyed, flaxen-haired babe of a few weeks old.

The eldest boy, John, held the baby in his arms as

carefully and tenderly as any woman could have done.

The children had just come in, and John, junior, was saying :

"You see, mother, Nan got tired, and so I took Em. in my own arms and brought her home, and she was just as good as a little kitten."

"Mother, I didn't want Jack to take Em. away from me, 'cause I'd rather a broken my back toting Em. than let a boy tote her, anyway," added Nan, by way of explanation and complaint.

"Oh, sho!" put in Jim; "Em. likes boys, anyhow! Just you see how she takes to pappy! She likes him a deal better'n she do mammy!"

"'Cept when she's hundry," cutely remarked little Jenny.

"Now what do you know about it, Jen.?" inquired the first speaker.

"Come, come, children, don't dispute! 'Let dogs delight,' you know. And besides, don't you see we have got company? What will Mrs. Whitlock think of you? Go speak to her directly, all of you, and ask her how she does," said Susan Palmer.

And though this ceremony seemed, under the circumstances, to be equally formal and awkward, the well-trained children obeyed their mother, and one by one they went up shyly and said :

"How do you, ma'am?"

And each in turn received the answer :

"Pretty well, I thank you, honey."

"And now, Jim, set a chair for Mrs. Whitlock," said his mother.

Jim complied, and the visitor seated herself.

"Now, Ann, do you set the table."

Nan flew to draw the pine table from the wall, and to cover it with a clean, white cloth.

"Jack, put the baby down in the cradle, and run up the lane to see if your father is coming."

Jack, with the baby in his arms, made for the cradle; but was stopped by Mrs. Whitlock, who held out her arms, saying:

"Here, boy, give me the child."

Jack set the baby on her lap and ran out of the house to look for his father.

"It's time John was in, that's certain," said the wife, a little anxiously.

As she spoke the baby's eyes lighted up and it made a little bound and crow.

"Do look at that child now! She saw her father before any of us, and here he is!" exclaimed Susan Palmer, as her husband entered the kitchen, drawn by their son.

"Here he is, mammy; I caught him just outside the door and brought him in, prisoner."

"Sich is life," said John laughing.

"What will you have done with him?" inquired Jack, as he pretended to hold the captive with an iron grasp.

Susan Palmer looked from the laughing boy to the stalwart, smiling man, and answered:

"I will have him set down in his old arm-chair, and I will have his wet boots taken off, and dry shoes brought to him, and then I'll have a basin of water and a crash towel brought for him, that he may wash his hands before supper, and, lastly, I will have his pipe cleaned out and filled with fresh tobacco, so that he may smoke as soon as he has eaten."

"Now, prisoner, you hear what the judge has said, don't you? Now sit right down here, and keep quiet until you are waited on and made comfortable, or it will

be worse for you," said Jack, drawing his father towards the great arm-chair, and seating him in it.

"Give me the baby, then! Give me my little Em.! Oh?" exclaimed John, as in looking after Em. he discovered her nurse. "Ah! I beg your pardon, ma'am. I did not see you before, ma'am. How do you do?"

"It's Mrs. Ann Whitlock, John, the hospital nurse, you know, who saved little Em.'s life, when the doctors would have given her up for dead," said Susan Palmer, almost reproachfully, as if John ought to have divined by instinct the presence of so good a friend and great a benefactress.

"Oh! indeed!" exclaimed honest John, with his face lighting up. "I am very glad to know you, ma'am, and to have a chance of telling you, what my Susan must have told you long ago, how thankful we all feel to you for saving this little darling's life. Will you let me take her in my own arms a bit, ma'am?" he inquired, gently lifting little Em. from the lap of her temporary nurse.

"Ah! My Susan will tell you that I always dote on the youngest child the most, and so I do; but, Lor' bless you! I think this little thing have wound itself around my heart-strings even more than any of the rest has done. Well, I s'pose it's because she is so dif'ent from the rest," he continued, tossing the babe in his arms, and smiling broadly over it. "All the rest is so dark and heavy-featured, like me," he laughed, holding the child up with one broad hand, while he ran the other over his own swarthy face and thick, black beard.

"And no wonder she is fair and delicate," put in Susan Palmer; "she is the living image of Miss Emolyn Wyndeworth, as I named her after—the living image, as is quite natural, for I do declare, for months and months before the baby came, I never had that poor unhappy young lady out of my mind!"

"Well, I don't know what the reason is, but I know she is a beauty and a darling, and pappy's own pet," exclaimed John, in the foolishness of his fatherly heart.

"And you are both very glad the baby lived, ain't you now?" inquired Mrs. Whitlock.

"Glad? Why, of course we are! Glad and thankful to Heaven and to you, Mrs. Whitlock," said John Palmer, heartily.

"Whatever could a made you ask such a question as that?" inquired Susan, in a tone of surprise.

"Oh, nothing. Only there's many married people as don't want babies, and won't have 'em!" answered Ann Whitlock.

"Then I think they are unnatural monsters, unfit to live themselves," said Susan, decidedly.

By this time Jack had brought his "pappy's" dry shoes, and Ann had got a basin of water and a towel, and even little Jim had filled his father's pipe.

So John made himself ready for supper, while Susan placed the tea, bread and butter, and bacon and eggs on the table.

Parents, children, and guest gathered around the board.

John kept the baby in his lap while he helped his companions to the fare before him; and then he would immediately have fed the baby with bacon and eggs if he had not been prevented by the women!

It was a merry meal, and even Ann Whitlock, notwithstanding her oppressed conscience was beguiled into good spirits.

When supper was over, many busy little hands soon cleared away the simple service, and then Susan Palmer and John, between them, carried a mattress and blankets up into the room above and made a comfortable bed for Mrs. Whitlock.

It was a well-filled little house. John and Susan and the two younger children slept in the bed in the parlor. The two boys and the eldest girl slept in a little loft over the kitchen, divided into two apartments by the simple means of a blanket stretched across from wall to wall. Mrs. Whitlock had the front room over the parlor.

Steady working people are early birds, and so the household soon separated and retired to rest.

The next morning, directly after breakfast, when John had gone to his work and the children to school, Mrs. Whitlock, leaving Susan Palmer "in the wash-tub" and the baby in the cradle, set off to walk to Green Point to tell Mrs. Warde that she had found a room.

Malvina Warde questioned her closely as to the locality of this room, and Ann Whitlock merely replied that it was in the house of a laboring man named Palmer.

This conveyed no particular information to Mrs. Warde, who knew nothing of the family; but she cautioned Ann Whitlock not to let her tongue run, and then, having exhorted her to be diligent in her search for Emolyn, and having presented her with a few necessary articles of furniture, scarcely worth carting away, she dismissed the unhappy tool.

Mrs. Warde used every means in her power to discover the retreat of Emolyn, but without success.

At length she thought of Doctor Willet and his strong attachment to the unhappy girl, and, feigning illness, she sent for the doctor to attend her.

The physician came, as in duty bound, and was shown up into Mrs. Warde's dressing-room, where he found his patient, arrayed in a very becoming dressing gown of crimson silk, and propped up in an easy-chair.

"I am sorry to find you indisposed, madame. I hope it

is nothing serious," said the doctor, politely, as he sat down by her side and felt her pulse.

Mrs. Warde spoke in a faint voice, complaining of sleeplessness, loss of appetite, languor, vertigo, and so on.

The doctor thought her malady must be what is commonly called spring-fever, and he prescribed a tonic, and arose to take leave; but Mrs. Warde lifted her hand and, by a sign, detained him:

"Pray, re-seat yourself, Dr. Willet; I have something to ask you about. I *hate* to revert to such a painful subject, but I cannot divest myself of all feeling of interest in the fate of that unhappy girl, Emolyn Wyndeworth," she said, and paused for a reply.

The doctor only bowed and kept silence.

"Can you tell me where her guardian has taken her, or what has become of her?" at length inquired Mrs. Warde.

"I really cannot, madame," coldly replied Dr. Willet, for he could not forget the cruel conduct of this hard woman to her helpless relative.

"I really cannot tell you where she is, or anything about her, except that she is out of our reach."

"But you know that much at least, which is more than any one else knows, I presume."

"Yes, and I know it principally through a letter from herself, received only yesterday. This letter was without date, and postmarked simply New York City. In it she said she wrote to express warm gratitude for what she was pleased to term my inestimable services to her (though they were indeed no more than what any Christian man in my place would have rendered any woman in hers). She thanked me with exaggerated earnestness, and then took a final leave of me, saying that she wished her name and memory to die out from

the minds of all who had ever known her; that she might never be talked of, heard of, or even thought of, again by any one, even by me. That is all I have to tell you, Mrs. Warde! From that you may know she is lost to us forever."

"She hopes to find some retreat in the uttermost parts of the earth where her degradation may remain unknown; yet she can never hope that her name can be buried in oblivion here," said Mrs. Warde, tartly.

"No," gravely and sadly replied the doctor; "she will not be forgotten here, but will be remembered with tenderest gratitude by all the poor whom she has succored, and with prayerful love and pity by all the friends she has won. Heaven bless and comfort her! Good morning, madame!"

And the doctor, fearing to lose his self-control by staying a moment longer in the exasperating presence of Mrs. Warde, abruptly departed.

"She has gone abroad, I suppose," said Malvina Warde.

Whether the lady's conjecture was true or false remains to be seen; but many years passed before the fate of Emolyn Wyndeworth was known.

And now, since Emolyn had passed out of her reach, Malvina Warde had no sufficient motive to detain her in the city, during the summer; nor, since the failure of all her plans, did she find her income sufficient to keep up the costly establishment at Green Point.

For all real estate and personal property she had only the mansion and its furniture and her own wardrobe and jewels. And for all income she had only her pension as a major's widow.

Certainly a woman of domestic habits and temperate desires might have lived on this income at Green Point, and even indulged moderately in social life.

But Malvina Warde had no love of her home, no taste for hospitality. She was selfish, sensual, vain, and extravagant. She wished to spend all her income on her own personal appetites, vanities, pleasures, and extravagancies.

She knew that she could easily let Green Point furnished, and thus more than double her present income, and be able to go to a first-class hotel at some gay and fashionable watering-place, where she could spend the summer, and, perhaps, attract some unmarried old millionaire and ensnare him into matrimony.

As soon as she had decided on this plan she hastened to carry it into execution.

It happened, about this time, that Mrs. Ann Whitlock called at Green Point, according to standing orders, to receive Mrs. Warde's instructions.

She found that lady busily engaged in writing an advertisement for her furnished house.

"Sit down, Whitlock, and hear what I have got to say. It will not take long. You need not seek Emolyn Wyndeworth any longer. She has gone abroad to hide herself in some remote foreign country where her story is unknown. I myself am about to leave the city for a long absence. I shall make you a present of the furniture I let you have for your room. Here are ten dollars to keep you until you can get work. After this, you must not expect anything more from me. And now I must solemnly warn you of one thing—not to let your old tongue run on the subject of Emolyn Wyndeworth! for if you do, just as sure as you live, it will run you into prison, or on to the gallows! You hear me, do you not?"

"Oh, madame, yes!" replied the trembling woman.

"Here, then, are your ten dollars. And now good-by, for I am busy."

"I thank you kindly, madame; and I will obey your orders and bid you good-by," answered the woman, as she courtesied respectfully and left the room.

But her whole aspect changed as soon as she found herself free of the house.

"Now, thanks be to goodness," she said, as her face lighted up with gladness—"I have got shet of that she devil! I feel just like Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress, when he dropped his load of sin—I do, indeed! Lor's knows I do! Joy go with you, Mrs. Malwiny Warde! And may you live long, and a long way from here!"

So saying, she hurried toward Laundry Lane.

"I tell you what, Susan Palmer," she exclaimed, as she entered the laborer's cottage and found his wife up to her elbows in a deep wash-tub—"if you have more work than you can get along with, here am I ready to help you; for the time has come as my means is getting low, and I must do something for a living."

"Dear woman, this very morning I refused a engagement to go to Dr. Willet's to wash and iron, three days out of every week, for a dollar a day, and the mistress ask me to try to find her a laundress. So if you are a hankering after work, why there it is; though, for my part, I don't see why you should trouble yourself to work for your living, when I tell you that I shall never ask you for rent, and shall always set a chair at our table for you," said kind-hearted Susan Palmer.

"Fiddle! I'm not agoing to set right down on top o' you and John, and take the children's bread out'n their mouths! No! Soon's ever I've rested, I'm gwine to the doctor's to engage that washing."

Mrs. Whitlock was as good as her word, and the same afternoon betook herself to Dr. Willet's, and contracted to keep the family in clean clothes for a certain

stipend a week, which, small as it was, sufficed for the woman's moderate needs.

And let it be now recorded of this faulty creature, that from the day she was delivered from the devil, in the shape of Mrs. Warde, she never again took what did not belong to her, or drank more than was good for her.

She continued to live with the Palmers, both giving and receiving help, and carefully watching over little Em.

About the first of July Mrs. Warde, having let her furnished house to advantage, and left her neglected daughter to spend all the mid-summer holidays at the school where she boarded, went off to Saratoga, where she took a suit of apartments in one of the best hotels, and threw herself into the vortex of gay and fashionable life.

And thenceforth, for years, Mrs. Warde left her daughter, first, as a parlor boarder, and then as an assistant teacher in the cheap boarding school where the girl had been educated, while she lived exclusively in the most expensive hotels, spending her summers at fashionable watering-places, and her winters in gay cities, and squandering all her income on her own pride, vanity and sensuality, while she forever schemed to entrap some wealthy man into marriage.

## CHAPTER XX.

### EM.

How swift the years, how fast the chain
That rattles on our brief to-day;
Before its echo comes again,
The present will have passed away.

JAMES STERLING.

Emolyn Bruce was a child of fifteen years when she vanished from our view.

She will be a woman of thirty when we meet her again.

Meanwhile our story takes up her little namesake, Em., the favorite child of John and Susan Palmer, "the flower of their flock."

We must pass quickly over the infancy and childhood of Em., pausing only to note some peculiar traits of character which made her seem so different from her stronger and ruder sisters and brothers.

In person, this child was very small for her age, with a perfectly proportioned form; slender, well-turned limbs; tiny, prettily shaped hands and feet; a little, round head, adorned with a light growth of pale, gold-tinted curls; a little, oval face, with small, clear-cut features; a complexion like an apple-blossom, pearly white and pale red; and large, soft light blue eyes fringed with lashes and arched with brows rather darker than her hair.

Em. was beautiful in repose—when sleeping in her cradle, or on her mother's bosom ; but she was more beautiful in animation, when wide awake, on her father's knee, dancing with flying feet and hands and sparkling eyes.

Infant beauty is one of the most potent love-charms in this world, and Em. possessed it in full perfection. Hence she became the idolized darling of the gentle workman's home.

It was not, however, her outward beauty alone that won all hearts ; it was the inward beauty that soon shone from her infant spirit.

She loved, and strangely—she *pitied* all about her, as if she intuitively felt the hardness of their lot ; or as if she had been some little angel, sent into the rudest paths of this rude, material world, to compassionate, comfort and brighten the lives of all around her.

She was so sensitive and sympathetic, that even before she could utter her feelings in words she betrayed them by signs.

If she saw a cloud of sadness on the careworn brow of her father, or her mother, her little, rosy lips would quiver with grief, and her tender blue eyes fill with tears.

When she was older and stronger she would climb to her weary, anxious father's knee and kiss and pat and soothe him into rest and smiles.

When she had learned to talk a few broken words she would come to her worried and fretted mother, caress her softly and say :

"Don't ky. I love oo. I do love oo ;" as if she knew that love was the panacea for all the pains of life.

Her love was very practical, too. It had "a body in it"—the body of usefulness. When she was scarcely two years old, and could just toddle about the house,

she tried her brave little best to help others in their work.

Did she see her father about to light a fire in the kitchen stove, she would instantly trot off to the wood-box in the corner and bring paper, chips, and even sticks of wood that tasked all her baby strength to drag them along ; and so, with several journeys to and fro, she would have all the fuel on the hearth by the time the stove was cleaned out to receive it.

Did her mother, while over the wash-tub, drop the slippery soap so that it slid away on the floor out of her reach, the eager child would immediately dart after it, catch it and bring it back with glee.

Did her eldest sister let fall an apple or a potato while paring them for dinner, the watchful baby would fly after the rolling fugitive as fast as her little limbs could carry her, and capture it and fetch it back in triumph.

Small services these, for at that time Em. was a very "small, little, wee woman" indeed ; but "straws show which way the winds blow," and these trifles indicated the germinating love, thoughtfulness, and helpfulness in the little being's soul.

This affection and consideration for others, this desire to help them and delight to please them, showed itself in every act and aspect of the child's life.

Why, if any customer of the laundress, pleased with the little one's beauty, gave her a piece of cake or candy, she instantly ran to give it to some one else ; and, if any others would take it, she would stand before them, with her hands clasped behind her, and watch them eat it, with her face perfectly radiant with frank joy—the joy in their supposed enjoyment. Thus, from earliest childhood Em.'s greatest delight was in delighting others.

Now, if any should doubt that such an angel child

ever lived, let me tell them that we ourselves had a little seraph with a heart like Em.'s, but that, as might have been expected, she went to heaven at two years old. From her we learned how angelic a child might be. But this is a digression. To return to Em.

She was ambitious and progressive—very anxious to do bigger things than she was able to do.

If any task was assigned to any of the elder children, she would run and hold up eager hands, exclaiming:

"Me! me! me! me do it!"

One day old Ann Whitlock, who passed most of her leisure time sitting in Susan Palmer's kitchen and knitting men's socks for sale, called Nanny, the eldest girl, to hold a hank of yarn while she wound it.

Nan, who was washing the breakfast dishes, did not come at once, but little Em., who was playing with her rag baby on the floor, started up and ran to the old woman with outstretched, eager hands, as usual, exclaiming:

"Me! me! me! Lemme!"

"You darling, I don't deserve as *you* should help me!" said the nurse; but, to gratify the child, she put the hank of yarn on her hands.

Em. held it so well and so patiently until it was all wound off, that after that day she was permitted to hold all the skeins of yarn for winding.

But her greatest pleasure was to be trusted with feeding the chickens in the back-yard, or bringing in the new-laid eggs from the hens' nests in the shed at the back of the kitchen.

About this time, the bountiful mother presented the family with another baby—a bouncing, black-eyed boy, who, being the youngest, of course put Em.'s little nose out of joint.

But the child's generous spirit knew no such thing as

envy. The helpness, new-born baby touched her tenderest sympathies, stirred the motherly love latent in the little maiden's soul. She wanted to hold the baby, to carry it, to nurse it, to wait upon it. She wished everybody to love it and serve it from morning until night. She brought her rag dolls, her wooden dogs and horses, her tin whistles and all her other treasures, and was disappointed and distressed that the baby could neither understand nor appreciate them.

And it may as well be said of her now as later, that this careful little maiden came to consider herself the responsible mother of this baby and all the younger babies that came afterwards to the large family.

But Em., in the course of her progress, developed another trait of character, scarcely in keeping with her rough surroundings—"In that state of life into which it had pleased Providence to call her." This was a delicate and dainty sense of purity and cleanliness that could not endure spot or blemish upon her dress or person. If any such fell upon her, she would pucker up her little lips and look up with an expression of distress that soon broke into tears if she and her grievance were not speedily re-dressed.

"I can't make out that child," would Susan Palmer often remark to her husband. "I can't, indeed. She ain't nothing like the other children. Why, the dirtier they are the better they like it."

"That's the way with all the children as ever I see," answered John; "the dirtier they are the free-an'-easier they feel, and, in course, the happier."

"But that ain't the way with Em. She's so nice she hardly ever siles her close at all; but if a spot, or speck of mellasses, or gravy, or anything else for that matter, happens to fall on her clean ap'on, you bet she is perfectly miser'ble until I put a fresh one on her, and not

only ap'ons, but plates and everything else. Why, law! you saw yourself at breakfast this very morning how her saucer happened to have some streaks of syrup on it, and how she pouted and pouted at the saucer until Nan had to take it away and give her another one. Such a child! And she not five years old yet!"

"'Sich is life,'" said John, at random; for when he could find nothing else to say, *then*, in season or out of season, he said *that*. And it was that which gained for John Palmer the reputation, in the lane, of being a philosopher—so cheaply, sometimes, is fame won.

"Now, wouldn't anybody think my Em. was a lady born, Mrs. Whitlock?" inquired Susan Palmer one morning, appealing to her lodger. "Wouldn't they think she was a little princess, a'most, to see her dainty little ways?"

"Oome!" moaned the conscious nurse. "I only wish we could bring her up as sich!"

"Well, then, *I* don't—much as I love her! Let's bring up the gal in the way she should go; to be a good and useful woman in that state of life into which it has pleased Providence to call her," said John, who had just come in from his work.

"That's what I say; for no good never come of no other course. I shall just bring Em. up as I bring the others up, to wash, iron, cook and clean house. Then she needn't never be afeared not to be able to yearn her own living," added Mrs. Palmer.

"Oome!" groaned Mrs. Whitlock. "And not give the poor child no edication at all?"

"Why, *that's* edication, and the very *best* of edication, too! But, in course, as soon as she is old enough, I shall send her to the Sunday School to larn to read her Bible, same as the other children. But if *you* think, Ann Whitlock, as because my Em. is different from all

my other childun, as I am a gwine to *make* any difference between her and the other childun, you never was more mistook in your life, ma'am. And if you s'pose because my Em. is the beauty of the family and the flower of the flock, and all that, I am going to bring her up as a lady, even s'posin' me and John was able so to do, you *are* out o' your reckoning! I love my Em. too much to want to do her sich a crying wrong! It is a great snare of the devil, let me tell you, for a poor young girl to be fetched up as a lady, and has been the ruination of a many!"

"Well," said Ann Whitlock stoutly, "I can tell you this: whether you bring her up as a lady or not, she *is* a lady every inch of her! and she will *be* a lady—there!"

"She's an honest, poor man's child and shall be brought up as sich! I shall fetch her up to yearn her living honestly, and the more disrelish she shows for hard work the more I'll put her to it: for her good, too! So there now!" persisted Susan Palmer.

"Sich is life," said the philosophic John.

But Em., as she grew out of infancy into childhood, evinced no disinclination for hard work. On the contrary, her love of others, and her desire to serve them, led her anxiously to engage in labor beyond her skill or strength.

Yet she did everything she could do so neatly.

"I never see a child or 'oman wash dishes so well, and make so little slop, or sweep a floor so clean, and raise so little dust, as my Em.," said Mrs. Palmer, when the helpful little maiden was about eight years old.

"I'd sooner have her fill my pipe than any on you, 'cause she always smooths it off so neat at the top, and spills not a bit of 'bacca," added John.

"That's because she has got such fine, little fingers,

Ah! if she could only be edicated as a lady," sighed Mrs. Whitlock.

"But she can't, no how in the world, and that's all about it. She have got to work for her own living, and she'll have to larn how to do it. Would you ruin my poor gal by raising of her as a lady, Mrs. Whitlock? Hows'ever, I don't say as I won't send her to the new free school to larn to read and write, soon as ever I take Jenny away. And I do hope that will please you, Ann Whitlock, and be satisfactory."

## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE HOME ANGEL.

Thus from within and from without
She grew, a flower of mind and eye;
'Twas love that circled her about,
And love that made her quick reply.

STERLING.

Meanwhile Susan Palmer, the busy and prolific mother, had been diligently increasing her family, until, when Em. was ten years of age, there were as many children younger as there were older than herself.

Thus stood the family roll:

Jack, a tall, manly youth of eighteen, enlisted in the marine corps then stationed at the Navy Yard.

Jim, a strapping boy of sixteen, apprenticed to a carpenter, in the neighborhood.

Nanny, a pretty brunette of fourteen, out at service as nursemaid to Mrs. Dr. Willet's children.

Jenny, a merry gypsy of twelve, going to the new public school.

Em., a bright little woman of ten, the willing Cinderella of the family, staying at home to help her mother, and to take care of the younger children. These younger ones were :

Tom, aged eight, whom the little mother called *her* eldest child, because he was two years younger and the first to come after her.

Ned, six, the companion of Tom.

Nell, four, and *her* playmate.

May, two.

While Susan Palmer washed and ironed, and brought in half the income of the family, the little motherly maiden, Em., took care of all those younger children making and mending their clothes and keeping them clean and neat.

As for herself, she was always a model of dainty and delicate freshness and purity in person and dress. She was the only blonde in the family, and her colors were blue and white, and they harmonized perfectly with her fair complexion, blue eyes and light hair. She was called the "little beauty" of the lane, and well she deserved the name, but better still she might have merited the title "little benefactress" of the lane, for such she was.

Her love and services were not confined to her father's house and family, but extended to all their neighbors, whom the little maiden helped as far as they had need and she had power.

Especially she looked after the neglected children of that poor neighborhood, whose destitution appealed to her tenderest sympathies ; and often she would bring them in, and wash and comb and feed them. Yes, and she would have taken off their soiled and sickening

rags and clothed them in clean and whole raiment, if she had possessed the means of doing so.

This child never coveted money to spend on herself: indeed, her "acquisiteness" was so small that she never acquired even the childish treasures that the poorest children accumulate. If a toy or a picture-book was given her by any visitor or customer of the laundress, she would be very grateful for it as a mark of kindness; but it would quickly pass into the possession of some one of the younger children who wished for it; but she took such delight in giving, that she got more enjoyment out of her transient and vanishing possessions than any one ever did out of heaped-up and hoarded treasures.

Em. had nothing—nothing in the world, except her meager supply of necessary clothing of the very cheapest material—two changes of white cotton under-clothing, two blue calico frocks, two white aprons, two pairs of white hose, a white cambric sun-bonnet, and a pair of leather shoes, a tiny steel thimble and a tooth-brush. There! that was the sum total of Em.'s personal property—not worth more than three dollars in all. Comb and hair-brush she had only in common with the other children, but it was her business to keep them very clean and nice. Scissors, needles and thread she had only in partnership with her mother and Jenny; but it was her care to keep the old family work-basket in order. No tangled thread or wisped cord, or knotted tape, or scattered buttons were to be found there; each article was in its separate little paper-box, or calico bag.

Poor as the home of the laborer and the laundress was, everything was neat, clean and orderly, through the ministrations of the little household spirit.

But the lane and the poorer children in the lane!

They were a burden and a sorrow to Em.'s large, loving heart.

Laundry Lane was far from being a respectable neighborhood. Indeed, John Palmer's family was the only really decent one in it. There were thirteen houses; six on John Palmer's side and seven on the other. There was no uniformity about these houses. Some were of one story and some of two; some of red brick and some of whitewashed wood, yet all with the exception of John Palmer's were in a greater or less degree of dirt and dilapidation, and all opened directly upon the reeking lane, with the gutter running down the middle, which was the receptacle of all the soap-suds from all the wash-tubs in the place.

The air of the lane was always unsavory with fetid slops, and noisy with brawling voices.

The inhabitants, always excepting the Palmer's, were a wretched set of creatures—worthless men, who worked until they got a little money, and then drank until they got into the station-house, or the county jail, for rioting or wife beating, or some other peculiar pastime; hopeless women, who washed and scolded, or idled and wept, who were often starved and beaten, and sometimes half killed and sent to the hospital; and children! ah, children! ragged, dirty, famished and utterly neglected! oftener on the filthy side-walk than in the house, and oftener in the reeking gutter than anywhere else!

It was the condition of these helpless little sufferers for the sins of others that weighed so heavily on the tender heart of our motherly little maid. When she had done all she could for any particular little waif, and could do no more, she would occasionally appeal to her mother—something in this way:

"Oh, mother! Poor Billy Smith!"

"What now?" would Susan say, lifting her head from

the wash-tub, and wiping the frothy suds from her strong red arms.

"He is *such* a pitiful sight, dear mother! He says his daddy's in the station-house—"

"Serve him right. I hope they'll keep him there!"

"And his mamma's in bed—"

"Drunk, as usual, I suppose—"

"But it isn't Billy's fault, dear mother. He's only five year's old, you know."

"Well, what's to be done about him? I know you have washed and combed and stuffed him. I know *that* without your telling me! Now what else do you want?"

"Dear mother, if you would only let me put one of Ned's suits on him and keep him here until—"

"Ned's got only but two suits in the world."

"Yes, mother, and he can only wear one at a time; the other one is hanging up idle on a peg, doing nobody any good."

"But, gracious goodness, gal! would you have me to give it away, when Ned will want it to change with?"

"No, mother, no, indeed. I only want you please to let me put one of Ned's suits on poor Billy, and let him stay here this afternoon until I can wash and mend his poor little clothes. He won't hurt Ned's suit, dear mother, I have scrubbed him so clean."

"Oome! And why should I do all that, I wonder?"

"Oh, dear mother, because our Saviour says 'Inasmuch as ye have done it to the least of these ye have done it unto me.'"

"Have your way, Em.!" said Susan Palmer, who, to tell the truth, was just as kind-hearted as her little daughter.

And Em. spent a happy afternoon in washing and

mending the neglected child's clothes and in dressing him neatly in them.

But, ah, these cases were always turning up, and the child's individual efforts to ameliorate the condition of the children, and stem the tide of vice, poverty and misery in the lane, were almost as those of the fabulous old woman who endeavored to sweep back an inundation with a broom!

"Oh, mother," she said one day, after she had washed, combed and fed a famished little girl, and let her go because she could do no more for her—"oh, dear mother, how I wish I was rich! Then I would take all these little children out of the street, and clean and clothe them, and put them in a good house with a plenty to eat and drink, and a plenty of books to learn, and work to do, and toys to play with. Oh, how I do wish I was rich!" breathed Em., with a sigh that was an earnest aspiration.

"Don't you wish no such thing as that, Em.! Riches is a snare, and power a temptation. You pray for the grace of the Lord, Em.! That's enough for you! You mightn't do half the good with your riches as you does with your poverty. Remember the widow's mite."

"Oh, yes, I should, mother dear, and oh! I do wish our Heavenly Father would make me rich for the poor children's sake. I would try to make a good use of riches!" earnestly answered Em.

"And sure I know you would, honey!" put in Ann Whitlock. "Sure, if you have been faithful over few things, wouldn't you be faithfuller over many? And don't you go for to be a disincouraging of her, Susan Palmer. You don't know what you are a doin' of! She may be rich one of these days! Who knows what may turn up? *I* don't."

"Well, *I* do! I know no riches ain't going to turn

up *honest* for her ; and she wouldn't want 'em *dis*honest I'll say *that* for any gal of *mine!* So I just wish you wouldn't be putting any sich nonsense in her head, Ann Whitlock !"

"Well, we shall see what we shall see, Susan Palmer! I tell you that gal is born to good luck."

"Why, law, Ann Whitlock, you interfere as much about that gal, and take her part as much as if she was your darter ! But there, you ain't got any childun of your own, poor thing, and besides you saved her life when she was a baby, and so I s'pose as it is all natural enough, and, I am sure, I should be the very last one to blame you," concluded the laundress kindly.

"Ooome," sighed the ex-nurse.

Up to the age of twelve, Em. could not be spared from household work to attend any but the Sabbath-school, and there she could learn to read fluently—not to write or to cipher. She was very anxious to improve in these respects, and often tried to copy the letters from Jane's writing-book, or puzzle out the figures on Tom's slate. Yet she never thought of complaining that her education was neglected.

At length, however, honest John Palmer interfered.

"Susan, woman, why don't you send Em. to a day-school? Here she is going on thirteen years old, and hasn't been anywhere but to the Sunday-school yet, and all the children were sent to a day-school as soon as they were seven years old ! How is it you don't send Em?"

"Why, law, John, I'm older than I was when the first childun was little, and the family is larger and the work is harder ; and Em. she is my right hand. I couldn't get along with all these little children, and the housework, and the cooking, and mending, and laundry work and all, if it was to save my life, without Em. !" replied the mother.

"But look a here! There's Jenny, she's been going to school ever since she was seven years old, and she is fourteen now. She's had schooling enough! Take her away to help you with the housework, and send Em. in her place."

"Law, John, how you talk! You don't know nothing about it. Mind your own work, good man, and let me mind mine."

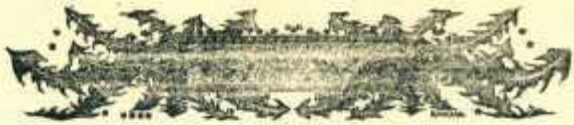
"So I will; but you must take Jenny home now, and send Em. in her place to school."

"Goodness gracious, John, I'm a going to take Jenny from school as soon as the August holidays comes; but I shall have to send her out to service. Mrs. Dr. Willet wants another under-housemaid, and she says she will wait until the first of the month for Jenny, so as to be sure of getting a good, honest, girl. And as Ann is already at service there, you know it will be so good to have Jenny in the same place. And it will be a steady home for both of them for years."

"Well, wife, you may fix everything else as you like, but one thing is certain, Em. has got to go to a day-school on the first of September. It will not do; now I put it to you, my dear, *will* it do? will it be fair to let our brightest child grow up a dunce?"

"Em. wouldn't grow up a dunce, not if she never saw the inside of a school. But, after all, you are right, John. Em. must be sent to school! Lor! I wasn't thinking how time was passing and how fast she is growing up. Dear me, yes! she must go to school in September, and I must let Mrs. Willet know that she will have to look out for another girl."

Accordingly, at the commencement of the fall term, Em. was entered at the same free school where all her elder brothers and sisters had received their education.



## CHAPTER XXII.

### A NEW PAGE.

A vague unrest
And a nameless longing filled her breast—
A wish that she scarcely dared to own,
For something better than she had known.
WHITTIER.

That first Monday in September on which Em. entered the public school, formed a turning-point in her life.

The teacher of the girls' department was a widow of the name of Templeton, a lovely and accomplished woman, whom bitter reverses of fortune had reduced to the necessity of earning her own and her child's living by teaching in the public school—for she had a daughter of twelve, who was a pupil in her own school.

Mrs. Templeton saw in Em.—what any stranger of even less fine discernment might easily have seen—a being of a more refined intellectual and spiritual organization than is often found in any class of society.

She examined the girl for classification, and finding that she could spell accurately and read admirably, she set her down at once to the study of penmanship, arithmetic and geography.

And oh! what a new life now opened before the child's delighted mind!

The map of the world alone, with its two hemispheres, its oceans and its continents, its zones and its north and south poles, was an object of wonder, curiosity and rapture. She fed upon her first lessons with an appetite that digested and assimilated every morsel!

Ah! the pleasant changes in the divisions of land! The delightful varieties in the divisions of water! The sublimity of the oceans and the mountains. The beauty of the lakes and of the islands! Heaven! what rapture it was to be borne out of narrow, fetid, stifling, Laundry Lane into a great, broad, magnificent world like this! for her eyes opened the door to imagination, and, from studying the map of the world on a common school atlas, Em.'s spirit revelled in vast space.

Her memory was as retentive as her imagination was vivid.

These were the strong pinions that bore her swiftly onward in her intellectual flight. So rapid was her progress that in one term she had so far outstripped her class as to be promoted to a higher one, where history was added to the list of her studies.

But Em. did not much enjoy the reading of history.

"It is almost all about fierce and cruel warfare, and the efforts of one king or one nation to destroy another. And the most ruthless destroyer was always the greatest hero! No, I don't enjoy history. I only read it with a painful curiosity," she said to her teacher.

"Emolyn, you are a very unique little being. I hardly know what to make of you," observed the lady.

"But, madam, does it not seem to you a sorrow and a shame that this sublime and beautiful earth, with its magnificent oceans and mountains, its lovely islands

and lakes, should be profaned by cruel and terrible wars, all arising out of the MONSTROUS selfishness of man? Oh, no, Mrs. Templeton, I take no pleasurable, only a painful interest in history. The earth is a delightful study, but man is a distressing one. Ah! I begin to understand now why the Lord had to come down from heaven to save them!"

Mrs. Templeton became more interested in her thoughtful young pupil, and offered to lend her books not to be found in the school collection, and invited Em. to visit her at her own house, and even encouraged an intimacy between Em. and her own young daughter, Hermia.

This was a very unusual mark of consideration on the part of the lady, for Em. was the child of a poor laborer and laundress, and Miss Templeton was the orphan daughter of a late cabinet minister, and the granddaughter of a general in the army. But Mrs. Templeton had the rare insight and rarer sense of justice to value persons according to their intrinsic worth rather than external circumstances.

"Among all Hermia's young companions I know not one whom I would so willingly welcome for her most intimate friend as this poor child of toil," said Mrs. Templeton to the Rev. Mr. Whittington, the Rector of Christ's Church, where herself and daughter attended Divineservice.

"I know the child She has been a pupil in our Sunday-school for several years, as her parents have been members of our church. She is a child of rare intellectual and spiritual gifts," was the approving reply of the minister.

Hermia Templeton was in many respects a contrast to Emolyn Palmer. They were both about the same age, but Em. was the fairest of blondes, with a clear

pink and white complexion, light blue eyes and golden curls, with delicate features, a slender figure and tiny hands and feet. Hermia was well-grown for her age—a tall brunette, with a pale, olive complexion, large, dark-brown eyes and dark-brown hair, plainly banded and straight as an Indian's. Em. was humble, sensitive, sympathetic, spirituelle, sprightly and enthusiastic. Hermia was proud, grave, thoughtful, earnest and affectionate, and she looked full two years older than her little friend.

Mrs. Templeton lived in a pretty, little brown cottage that stood in a flower-garden full of fragrant roses and vines, and that had a lovely little parlor with a bay-window, and was upholstered in blue, and opened into a tiny library full of choice books. It had also cosy, little white-draped bedrooms, and altogether looked like a charming toy palace.

Em. thought it as beautiful as fairyland, and so it was in comparison with Laundry Lane.

But Em. did not yield to the temptation of visiting Violet Villa. Though she loved to be there, she knew that her little brothers and sisters needed her at home, and that all her time out of school was due to them.

But, oh, the contrast was painful between the fragrant garden around Violet Villa and the fetid lane before her own poor dwelling-house.

The dirt, the fetor, the discord and noise of the lane was a source of great discomfort to the Palmer family, and of much distress to Em.

John Palmer would have moved away to a more wholesome neighborhood but for his cat-like love of the house he was used to.

He often said that that was the home to which he had brought his wife when they were first married that all their children had been born there except Em.

who, poor little thing, had been born in a hospital; that some of his children had died there; that all the joys and sorrows of his life had come to him there, and finally there he looked to live and die. He was an oyster and his house was his shell, from which if he was shucked he should perish.

Poor John Palmer! The time was destined to come when he was in danger of being an oyster roasted in the shell. But let us not anticipate.

John Palmer was the only permanent tenant in Laundry Lane. All the others were always moving in or moving out.

There was one little, tiny, red brick hut at the end of the lane, on the same side with John Palmer's cottage—that is to say, the red hut was at the entrance of the lane, and John Palmer's place at the opposite extremity. This hut was very dilapidated, damp and unwholesome, and changed occupants oftener than any other house in the lane.

One day Em. coming in from school, said:

"Mother, there is an old colored woman moved into the red hut now. I saw her sitting at the door knitting. She looks very old and poor, and she asked me if I knew where she could get socks and stockings to foot, and she said she could do them cheap. Now, you know we ought to help her to get work, ought we not, mother? And so, you will speak to the ladies you wash for, mother? Some of them might be really glad to find a person who could foot stockings—there are so few knitters left now-a-days."

"Lor, Em. Now you have got an old colored woman! Who will you take under your wing next? Well, after tea, you and I will go down the lane and look at some of the old creetur's knitting, and, if it is well done, I'll recommend her. Now hurry and get your father's sup-

per ready right away! I must put down all these clothes in soak to be washed out to-morrow morning."

The busy little maiden put away her books, hung up her bonnet, and began to prepare the evening meal.

She set the table, fried the bacon, toasted the bread and made the tea, so that by the time John's step was heard upon the threshold, all was ready for him to sit down and eat.

After supper Susan Palmer threw a shawl over her head, and calling Em. to accompany her, left the house in charge of John, and walked down the lane to look after her daughter's new *protégée*.

When they came to the little red hut, they found the old black woman sitting in the door smoking her pipe.

On seeing her, Mrs. Palmer burst into an exclamation of surprise, ejaculating:

"The Lord deliver us, Aunt Monica! Is this *you?*"

"Yes, honey! Yes, chile! Dis is me, ole Aunt Monica, what used to b'long to ole Marse Captain Wyndeworth, honey! But who is *you?* 'Pears like you know me, but I don't 'member of you, chile!" said the old woman, raising her blear eyes and peering through the deepening twilight into the face of the visitor.

"Don't you know Susan Palmer, Aunt Monica? Susan Palmer, as your dear good young lady, Miss Emolyn, used to be so kind to? Sure you remember me now!"

"Oh! Ay, ay! Yes, yes! Well, well! To be sure I do! And I'm mighty glad to see you, too! And is this here your darter? Fine gal she is! Took the trouble to stop and speak to me; the only one as has spoke to me, or took notice of me since here I've been! She's your darter honey?"

"Yes, Aunty, she is my third daughter—the one that was born in the hospital, you know, about the time poor dear Miss Emolyn was in her trouble."

"Ay, ay! I 'member well! Talking 'bout that, how much she is like Miss Emolyn, in her looks and in her ways too. It struck me all of a heap, when I seen her this arternoon, and she come and stopped and spoke to me so sweet, and asked me how I did and when I moved here, and if I had any friends! Deed did she! I thought I was a dreaming! Clar to goodness, I had to stop and pinch myself to see if I was awake! For 'peared to me like Miss Emolyn, jist as I had knowed her, as a growing gal, was standing right afore me, or else as I was a dreaming of a dream about her."

"She *is* the image of Miss Wyndeworth, but, Lor', when you come to know all about it you won't wonder! Why, for months before that gal was born, Miss Emolyn was never out of my mind, day nor night; consequence is, she is the living image of Miss Wyndeworth, and though I am her mother, I must say it, and I am thankful I can say it. She has her sweet ways, as well as her sweet looks."

"Ay! ay! I'll warrant you she has. But come in, honey! Come in, chillun, and set down. The jew's a falling, and you might get cold. 'Sides which, this gutter here smells awful—'nough to give a body the tyefoot fever."

So saying, Aunt Monica hobbled to her feet and stood aside to let her visitors pass into the hut, which they did.

It was a poor place, with a brick floor, a rude bedstead, a little, oak table, one low, chip-bottomed chair, two three-legged stools, some cups and saucers ranged on the mantelpiece, a few cooking utensils hung within the jambs, and a low, smouldering fire in the chimney.

Aunt Monica gave Mrs. Palmer the seat of honor—the flag-bottomed chair—and placed a three-legged

stool for Em. Then she herself sat down and waited respectfully to be addressed.

"Well, now then, Aunty, let us talk about old times and tell each other all that has happened to us since we last met! I haven't got much to tell myself. Me and John have lived in the self-same house, in the self-same lane, ever since: only he had steady work, and so had I, so that we have prospered in our humble way. And we have had four children since Em. was born, two fine boys, and two fine girls. We have nine living children, Aunty!"

"Bless de Lord for all his mercies!" ejaculated Aunt Monica.

"Now, tell me about yourself, Aunty? Where have you been all these many years?—Why, bless my heart, how long it has been! Em. was a baby when you went away, and now she is almost a young woman! Where have you been, Aunty, and what have you been doing?"

"Bless your soul, honey, I done been trapesing up and down the world, after Miss Melwiny Warde! You 'member when she bruk up housekeeping at the Pint?"

"Yes, of course I do."

"Well, honey, she hired out the men-servants, so she did, but she took me with her, for her own 'oman, to wait on her in her own room and to take care of her jewels and her laces and her dresses and her things, cause she knowed I was honest and she was always s'picious of strangers. So she took me long of her, honey. And we trapesed up and down the world together, sometimes in Washington, and sometimes in York, and sometimes in Orleans, and sometimes at this springs and sometimes at that springs! So about thirteen or fourteen years we went up and down the world, and to and fro the world like the devil in the story of Job; until this las' year, chile. I broke right down and

wasn't able to travel so much, and got used up with rheumatism so often that, at last, when Miss Melwiny come to the city 'bout a mont' ago, she up and give me my free papers—to 'vent the expense o' 'viding for me, I do b'lieve ! But, Lord, chile, I was that glad to be shet of *her*, I didn't care if I starved. So, chile, you see, dough I did love my dear ole marster, Captain Wyndeworth, with all my heart, I hadn't no use for Miss Melwiny ! I hadn't indeed ! So I 'cepted my free papers thankful enough, and then, as I did have about fifty dollars hid away as I had saved from presents give me by the gentlemen as I used to cook sich nice oyster suppers for, in ole Marse Captain Wyndeworth's time, I just come and rented this yer little house, and bought a handful o' second-hand furnitur' cheap, and set up for myself here. I got thirty-eight dollars left as a nest egg ; but that ain't a-going to last forever, chile, 'less I add to it ! So if you could leave a little knitting or darning or mending in my way, you'd be a doing of a kindness to a poor widow woman."

"Certainly I will, Aunty ; and as you are a knitter, I think you will find a plenty of work and no opposition ; because, you see, there are hardly any knitters to be had now."

"Bless you, honey, if you get me a plenty of knitting to do, you will make my fortin !" exclaimed the old woman.

"And now, Aunty, we must bid you good-night. Come, Em., we must be going," said Susan Palmer, rising.

"Good-night, chillun ! Thank you kindly, though I know it was all that gal's doings, your coming to see me," said Aunt Monica, as she followed her visitors to the door.

"Come, Em.," said Susan Palmer, as they walked

down the lane. You must go to-morrow and speak a good word to Mrs. Willet and to Mrs. Templeton, too, for the poor old creature."

"Yes, mother, I will go early to-morrow," replied the girl.

But "to-morrow" a strange adventure happened to Em., that was destined to influence her life and fortune.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### EM.'S ADVENTURE.

**She has** a tear for pity, and a **hand**
**Open** as day to melting charity;
**Yet,** notwithstanding, being **incensed, she's fire!**
SHAKESPEARE.

Em. was up by sunrise, helping her mother to get her father's breakfast ready; for John was at work at the arsenal, and had to leave home every morning early enough to be at his post by six o'clock.

From six to six were the workingmen's hours of labor in those hard days.

"Now you know what you have got to do, little woman, as soon as ever you have swallowed your breakfast," said Susan Palmer to her busy little daughter, who was springing back and forth from the cooking-stove to the table, setting the morning meal upon the board.

"Oh, yes, mother dear, I have got to go to Dr. Willet's to try to get work for old Aunt Monica, before I go to school, so I must start early, so as to be in time," cheerfully replied Em.

"Yes; and you have got to do something else before you go to Dr. Willet's even. You have got to take this bundle of clothes to the City Hotel, to a gentleman who is going away this forenoon, and must have them at once."

"Very well, mother dear. I sha'n't be long over my breakfast," said the girl.

"Now, Susan Palmer, I really must interfere, whether you like it or not. I do think it a sin and a shame to send a pretty, innocent girl like Em. to carry clothes home to a gentleman in a hotel. I do!" said Ann Whitlock, earnestly.

"Fiddle-de-de! Em.'s a child!" answered Mrs. Palmer.

"Em. 'll be fifteen years old the first of next May; and she is just at the very age when she ought *not* to be sent on no such errands. No good won't never come of it. If you want them shirts took to the gentleman at the hotel, and you can't do it yourself, and haven't got nobody else to send but only that young gal, why, I'll take 'em myself, sooner'n she should go! I tell you ag'in, she's just at the age when she oughtn't to be sent on no sich errands. If she was younger, it wouldn't matter; nobody 'd hurt her! If she was older, it wouldn't matter; she'd know how to take care of herself! But at *her* age! I tell you, Susan Palmer, you'll rue the day you ever risked your darter that way."

"Fiddlesticks! Em.'s safe enough! I don't believe the world is full of roaring lions raging up and down and seeking whom they may devour. No, and even so, they wouldn't hurt my harmless little maid, or even if they wanted too, Em. could take care of herself. Couldn't you lass?"

"Yes, mother! I am not afraid!"

"Very well; I wash my hands of it! that is all," concluded Mrs. Whitlock.

The breakfast was placed upon the table, and John Palmer was called in from the little back yard, where he had been profitably employed in cutting and piling up wood for the use of the family during the day.

As soon as breakfast was over, the patient laborer departed to his day's work.

Then Em. put on her bonnet and took the neatly done up parcel containing half a dozen clean shirts, and started with them, for the City Hotel.

She had scarcely left the door, however, before she ran back, inquiring:

"Mother dear, whom must I take these shirts to? You forgot to tell me the gentleman's name."

"Oh! so I did! Commodore Bruce, Em.! a navy officer, honey! Seems he's stopping at the City Hotel; but he is going to start for Virginia to-day. So be spry, my dear, or you may keep the old man waiting."

"I'll hurry, mother," said Em., and she tripped briskly down the lane towards the broad street leading to the avenue on which the City Hotel stood.

As she passed the red hut she noticed old Aunt Monica sitting in the door.

"Be of good cheer, auntie," she said. "I shall be sure to bring you some work to-day."

"Thanky, my good angel. I know you will, if you can," gratefully replied the old woman.

"And I will, *whether or no*, by some means or other," said the child to herself as she hurried on.

It was a long way to the avenue; but she walked fast, and soon reached the City Hotel, where she rang at the private entrance and inquired for Commodore Bruce.

The porter called an usher, who showed her up to a chamber on the third floor, and rapped at the door.

"Come in," said a voice from the room.

"It is a girl with a bundle, sir. Go in, miss," said the waiter, opening the door and ushering in the humble visitor.

Em. found herself in a large, handsomely-furnished bed-chamber, and standing before a tall, fine-looking, old gentleman of stately and dignified presence, with a grand head and a noble face, framed in with snow-white hair and beard. He was dressed in the uniform of a commodore in the navy, which became him well.

"I have brought your washing home, sir, and I hope that I am in good time," said Em., with modest politeness.

"You are in good time, my child, but you look tired and heated. I fear that you must have walked very fast," said the commodore kindly.

"I did walk fast, sir; but it will not hurt me, thank you," replied Em., slightly coloring to be noticed so much.

"But you are out of breath. Sit down and recover yourself. Have you had your breakfast?"

"Oh, yes, sir. Hours ago, thank you."

"You are an early bird, then. But sit down and rest, when I tell you. Don't be afraid. Sit down," said the commodore, in the kind yet peremptory tone of one accustomed to exercise a paternal sway over all with whom he came in contact. And he took the parcel from her hand, placed it on a table, and pushed a chair toward her.

Em. instinctively obeyed and seated herself.

The old commodore looked at her so wistfully that Em. cast down her eyes.

Then the old man spoke to her as respectfully as if

she had been a little lady instead of a little laundress, and said :

"Excuse me, my dear, but I could not help looking at you, for you remind me so strongly of one I used to know long ago. Are you the child of Mrs.—Mrs.—I mean the good woman who did my washing, I have forgotten her name?"

"Palmer, sir."

"Are you her daughter?"

"Yes, sir."

"What is your name, my dear?"

"Em., sir."

"Emma? Emily? Emmeline? Which?"

"Emolyn, sir."

"EMOLYN!" exclaimed the commodore, in surprise.

"Yes, sir," answered Em., in embarrassment, caused by the old man's sudden exclamation.

"Lord bless my soul—what a name, and what a likeness!" muttered Commodore Bruce in a low voice, as he threw himself into a chair and a short meditation.

"Who gave you that name?—Oh! I am questioning you like a church catechism! Who called you Emolyn, my dear? It is an unusual name. I never knew but one who bore it."

"My mother named me Emolyn, sir, after a young angel lady who used to be so good to the poor that she never kept anything for herself. Her name was Emolyn Wyndeworth," replied Em., regaining confidence in the kindly and paternal manner of the old sailor.

"Emolyn Wyndeworth! Yes, and you are the very counterpart of Emolyn Wyndeworth, as I knew her in the last, sorrowful year of her life; for I suppose she has passed away long ago! I have not heard of her for nearly fifteen years. It is strange. You seem her very self in humble attire."

"The likeness has been often noticed, sir, by those who remember that lady; but my mother accounts for it by saying that Miss Wyndeworth was in her thoughts for months and months before I was born," said Em., innocently repeating Susan Palmer's absurd argument.

"Hum, ha, I don't know. 'More things in heaven and earth,' and so forth. But, child, I am keeping you. Here is your mother's money. God bless you! And may you grow as like Emolyn Wyndeworth in spirit as you are in form!"

"Thank you, sir," said Em., in a low voice, as she took the laundress's wages, arose, and left the room.

The commodore walked thoughtfully up and down the floor, muttering to himself:

"Now, have I not acted like an old idiot, making such an ado over that washerwoman's daughter, merely because she bears the name of Emolyn and resembles Miss Wyndeworth! Yet what a likeness! Good Heaven! she seemed Emolyn Wyndeworth herself, standing before me in plain clothes! That poor child! That poor Emolyn Wyndeworth! That poor, motherless girl, too much left to herself—left to drift down to destruction! And my poor lost boy loved her so! They were like Paul and Virginia. How he implored me to let him marry her, before he went to sea! He a boy and she a child! And how touchingly he spoke of her desolate girlhood, and begged me to take care of her on that night before he left us—left us to go on that fatal voyage! I wish I had let him marry her young as they both were; for I had my suspicions, from what followed, that they ought to have been married before. Yes, yes, I wish I had consented to that marriage! And I wish I had been kinder to the motherless girl, commended to my charge by my poor,

doomed boy! Ah! I am not free from reproach for all that has happened. We are too often responsible for the sins and sorrows of others, for which we blame and pity only them! Well! well! they have both passed away from the earth, and perhaps have met in a happier land. I don't know. And what has brought all this back to me with such painful vividness! The accidental, but most wonderful, likeness of that washerwoman's daughter to poor Emolyn Wyndeworth! Tut! tut! all this is useless self-torture. I will ring for Terry to pack up, and then for Virgina and 'The Breezes!'"

So saying, the commodore rang for his servant, an old, superannuated sailor like himself, dear to him for the many voyages they had made, the many battles they had fought, the many storms they had encountered, and the many dangers they had escaped together, and who, for these reasons, now shared his old commander's honorable retirement.

Terry came in answer to his master's summons.

"Secured our places in stage-coach, O'Connell?"

"Ay, ay, sir!" answered the veteran, carrying the back of his hand to his brow.

"Right! Now go to work and pack up quicker than you ever did anything in your life before. We are off for 'The Breezes,' with no time to lose."

"Ay, ay, sir!" responded the old tar, with another salute, as he set about his work.

And he made such dispatch that within a half hour all was ready, and within an hour the commodore and his servant were seated in the stage-coach, on their way to Virginia.

In the meantime Em. having left the hotel, hurried on towards the school-house, intending to call at Dr. Willet's on her way, to try to engage work for old Aunt Monica.

To gain time, Em. took a short cut, by turning down into a narrow street leading from the avenue to the square on which the doctor's house stood.

She had scarcely turned the corner, when the terrified cries of a child, mingled with piteous pleadings in some foreign tongue, arrested her steps for a moment, and then hastened them; for there, a few yards before her, she saw a rude and drunken brute cruelly beating a dark-eyed brown-complexioned little girl of not more than seven years old.

Now, if there was one set of beings Em. loved more than all others, they were little children. And if there was another set of creatures she abhorred more than all the rest, they were cruel men.

The brute's blows were falling heavily, the child's voice was wailing piteously.

Em. did not stop to measure strength with the monster, or to count the cost of the conflict. She dropped her school-books and rushed to the rescue.

She caught the screaming child up in her strong young arms, and rushed with it to the opening of the narrow alley, and out upon the broad avenue, where there were plenty of people passing.

So sudden had been her onset that the ruffian had not been prepared for it. Indeed, amazed by the audacity of Em.'s act, and muddled by strong drink, he stood stupefied for a moment, before he staggered after her in pursuit, cursing and swearing and yelling forth:

"Gimmy my darter, yer jade! I'll have ye arristed! How dar' ye? Gimmy my darter, I say!" interlarding each sentence with a volley of oaths.

But Emolyn, now on the corner of the avenue, placed her back against the wall of a house, and clasped the cowering child to her bosom.

"Gimmy my darter, yer ——! or I'll *mash* yer!"

"She is not your daughter. She is a foreign child, you wretch! Stand off!" cried Em., straining the little girl to her breast with one arm, while she held the other out in repulsion of the monster.

He reeled towards her and raised a club, which, if it had fallen, would have ended Em.'s story then and there.

But the club was sent flying from his hand with a sharp blow, and he was laid sprawling on the sidewalk by another.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### RONALD BRUCE.

A fine and manly brow, though sun and wind
Have darkened it. L. E. LANGDON.

Heroic Em. looked up to see a handsome, dark-eyed young man, in the uniform of a lieutenant in the Navy, and with a stout stick in his hand, standing over the fallen foe.

But the young man was not looking at her then; he was signalling a policeman from the next corner.

The officer came up.

"Take this drunken and murderous beast into custody. He has just made an assault with intent to kill. Carry him before the peace officer of the ward. I will follow with these children and give my testimony," said the lieutenant, as he spurned the brutal body with his boot, and turned to Em. and her trembling *protégée*.

"What has been the matter here? Why did that man assail you?" he inquired.

"He was beating this child cruelly. She is not his child, as you may see, sir. And even if she had been, he had no right to beat her so, and I should have interfered all the same. But she is a foreign child, as you hear, sir, if you speak to her," replied Em.

"Why did the wretch beat you, little one?" inquired the lieutenant, bending his kindly dark eyes down on the picturesque, little, foreign face turned up, half in gratitude, half in fear, to his.

His tone and look reassured the child, and she replied with an impetuous babble of broken music, that was quite unintelligible to Em., though perfectly plain to the young lieutenant.

"She is a little Italian. The man was trying to compel her to mount the stilts and learn to walk on them, for street exhibition, to make money. Every time she mounts on stilts she falls from them and hurts herself badly. She was afraid to get on them again, and was begging the man to have pity on her, when he beat her," said the young lieutenant, in answer to Em.'s inquiring look.

"But what right had such a monster to tyrannize over her? Has she no parents, no friends?" indignantly inquired Em.

"I do not know. We have not time to question her further now. We must follow the policeman, who has gone off to the magistrate's office with the ruffian, for I intend to prosecute the brute and see this affair at an end. Come, little one."

And so saying, the young lieutenant took the little stranger by the hand and led her on.

Then seeing Em. hesitate, he said:

"Come! come, you must come with us. You were the party whom I saw assailed, and you must also give evidence of the assault upon the child."

Em. followed the young man without the least embarrassment, for indeed he had scarcely looked at her.

They soon overtook the policeman, who, with his stupefied and staggering prisoner, made but slow progress down the avenue.

Fortunately the magistrate's office was not far off.

The whole party soon reached and entered it.

The policeman led his prisoner in, followed by the lieutenant leading the child, and by Em., who entered alone.

There was no one in the room but the few officers in attendance.

The morning's batch of night prisoners from the station house had been disposed of hours before. The magistrate sat back in his arm-chair reading the day's paper; the clerk, perched upon a stool, whittled a stick, and two bailiffs lounged near the windows.

The magistrate laid down his paper and took off his spectacles; the clerk threw away his stick and shut up his penknife, and the two policemen took their feet off the seats of the chairs and stood at "attention."

The policeman having the rough in custody took him immediately up to the magistrate's table, saying:

"An old customer, your worship—Jake Duggan, living in Pig Alley."

"What's the charge besides drunkenness," inquired the magistrate, bending his eyes severely on the old offender while he questioned the officer.

"Here is the gentleman at whose complaint I took him in custody, your worship," said the policeman, making way for the young lieutenant, who then came up to the table and said:

"My name is Ronald Bruce. I am a lieutenant in the United States Navy, now on leave of absence. I charge that man with making an assault upon this young girl

with intent to kill. Swear me, and I will make my statement under oath."

The oath was administered by the clerk, and then the young lieutenant described the scene he had witnessed on the avenue, when he had arrived at the corner of Pig Alley in time to arrest the deadly blow aimed by the prisoner at the young girl before them.

When Lieutenant Bruce had finished his testimony, Em. was called to give her evidence.

She told them that her name was Emolyn Palmer, that she was the daughter of John Palmer, laborer, living in Laundry Lane, and then she described the scene *she* had witnessed in Pig Alley, where the brutal man had terribly beaten the little child whom she had suddenly rescued from him by snatching her up and running away to the avenue, where the man pursued them with threats and curses, but was prevented from hurting them by the timely intervention of the lieutenant.

When Em. had finished her testimony, the poor, little Italian girl was brought forward. Her scant clothing hung in tatters on her emaciated person. Her abundant jet-black tresses clustered in uncombed mats about her dark, picturesque face, which would have been beautiful but for the look of wild sorrow in the large, dark eyes, and about the drooping corners of the full, red mouth. Her feet and legs were bare; her arms and neck were covered with bruises.

Being questioned as to her relations with the man who had so brutally beaten her, she replied with a vehement babble of language incomprehensible to all her hearers, except to the young navy officer, who understood Italian, and volunteered to translate it.

She then said her name was Valencia Piozzi; that her mother and father had come to this country two years before; but both had died of cholera soon after their

arrival; that Jake Duggan had promised her father to take care of her; but that he sent her into the streets to sell matches and pins and to beg, and when she didn't bring home any money he would beat her and send her out again, even if it was in the dead of night, and when she *did* bring in any money he would buy rum and get drunk, and get mad and beat her all the same. At last, she said, he wanted to make her learn to walk on stilts, to make money on the streets, but she could not learn; she always fell off them and hurt herself badly. And this morning she begged him to spare her, but he was drunk, and he answered by beating her worse than ever.

The marks upon the miserable child's person attested the truth of her terrible statement.

When the miscreant who had so brutally misused her was asked what he had to say for himself, he replied that the child was his own; that her dying father had given her to him; that he had more right to her than any one else; that he stood in the place of a parent to her; that he was teaching her how to get her own living; that he had a right to do that, and a right to correct her when she was disobedient, and no one had a right to prevent him, as that bold girl had done, when she snatched her up and ran away; and that instead of himself being arrested, *she* ought to be prosecuted for violent abduction, and she should be, too, if there were law and justice in the land.

The sitting magistrate thought there was law and justice enough in this land to adjudicate this case, so he sentenced Mr. Duggan to the work-house for ninety days, and sent him off under the escort of two policemen.

"And now, what is to be done with this poor little waif!" inquired the young lieutenant, still holding the

hand of the little Italian, who clung to him with her claw-like fingers, and gazed up at him with her wild eyes, as if in him lay all her hopes of mercy on this earth.

"Hum!" said the magistrate. "I must send her to the work-house, too."

"But what has she done to deserve it?" inquired the young officer, in almost angry surprise.

"Nothing at all; but there's no other refuge for her. I shall send her to the pauper's ward, of course, not to the criminals."

"Oh, pray, do not send her to the work-house, at all, sir," earnestly pleaded Em., who had been a silent, but deeply interested listener to the discussion. "I will take her home with me, and I know my father and mother will take care of her sooner than let her go to the work-house."

The magistrate gazed at the earnest girl in surprise and perplexity, and when she had done speaking, he said:

"But people do not willingly take upon themselves the burden of other people's children. Your parents will probably refuse to admit this vagrant child, and no one could blame them for doing so."

"Oh, no, they will not, sir. I feel sure they will take her in. But if *you* doubt it, sir, it is so easy for you to send some one home with us to see how it will be, and then if my parents should refuse to take her in, as I am *sure* they will not—why, then your messenger can bring her back to you," said Em.

"Well, I could send a policeman with you, though I am convinced it would be on a fool's errand!" observed the magistrate.

"Allow me, sir!" interrupted the young lieutenant, who had looked at Em. for the first time, and, having

seen her, never withdrew his eyes from her while she spoke. "Allow me; I think this young lady speaks from conviction. I will take the little Italian child and go with Miss Palmer to her parents' house, and if they should decline to take her in, I will bring her back to you, to be disposed of according to your pleasure. Have I your permission to do as I propose?"

"Certainly, Lieutenant, and I also appreciate your kindness. I hope the good people may be inclined to take the poor little waif. Perhaps, also, the Commissioners of the Poor might allow them something for her support. I will see to that in the event of their taking her," cordially replied the magistrate.

"Then I will bid you good-day! Come, little one! Come, Miss Palmer, show us the way, my good young lady," said the lieutenant, taking the hand of the little Italian to lead her from the office.

"Miss Palmer!" "Young lady!" Em. had never been called so in all her little life, and she was half abashed, half pleased at the compliment.

She walked on a little in advance of the young lieutenant and the child, and the more embarrassed she felt the faster she walked, so that they could scarcely keep up with her. The young officer talked with the child in her own language, and occasionally addressed a few words to Em., always treating the laundress's daughter with as much respect as he would have shown to any lady of his acquaintance. Indeed, the fair delicate, refined beauty of Em. could not be disguised by her coarse, blue calico suit and plain, white cambric bonnet.

"This way, if you please, sir," she said, at length, as she turned into Laundry Lane and picked her way, through its fetid, sloppy walk, towards her father's house.

Fortunately for her feelings, she did not see the involuntary look of surprise and disgust that came over her companion's face.

"It is not much farther now, sir; my father's house is at the other end of the row, only," she added, as she tripped along, ahead, and at length paused before the little, green painted door that led into the white-washed cottage she called her home.

She opened the door and admitted her party at once into the tidy front room, which we have already described as doing double duty of parlor and principal bed chamber for that small house and large family.

"Sit down here, if you please, sir, and I will go in the kitchen and speak to mother," she said, as she placed a chair for her guest and passed quickly into the back room, where she found Susan Palmer, as usual, up to her elbows in the wash-tub.

"Mother, there's a gentleman in the front room wants to speak to you," she said.

"Hi, Em.! you out of school a'ready? I didn't know as it was nigh twelve o'clock yet, and the table not set for dinner! A gentleman wants to speak to me? What for? Washing, I s'pose! I can't take no more washing. There now!"

"Oh, mother, it is not about washing. But, please, come in and see him, do?" said Em.

"Well, I s'pose it's tracts or something! Let me make myself decent first," muttered the laundress, as she took her red arms out of the wash-tub and wiped them dry with a coarse crash towel.

Then she proceeded to dress for company by the simple process of taking off her apron and letting down the tucked-up skirt and rolled-up sleeves of her neat, brown calico dress.

"Now set the table for dinner, Em., while I go in

and see the gentleman," she said, as she finally shook herself into order and went into the front room.

Em. was just a little disappointed, as the door closed after her mother, and she felt that she should see no more of the brave and courteous gentleman who had saved her life and treated her with such chivalric respect as she had never before received.

For the first time Em. sighed deeply without knowing why, as she raised the leaves of the folding table, and laid the cloth for dinner.

She heard a brisk conversation going on in the adjoining room, but could not hear its purport.

She finished setting the table to the very last item, and then took her work-basket, half full of hose, and sat down to darn them while waiting for that interview to end.

Twenty minutes, that seemed two hours, passed, and then Em. heard the front door open and heard the visitor taking leave.

She heard the door shut on him, and the next instant the communicating door opened and Mrs. Palmer entered the kitchen, leading the little vagrant in her hand.

"Oh, mother, you have consented to take her! Dear, good mother, I knew you would! I told them you would—the Lord bless your tender heart!" exclaimed Em. forgetting her disappointment at not taking leave of the lieutenant in her pleasure at having the little orphan received.

But Mrs. Palmer astonished her daughter by dropping down in her chair, exclaiming:

"I do think I'm the most *put* upon 'oman as the Lord ever did make! As if I hadn't children enough of my own 'dout having of a strange child set right down on top o' me, whether or no!"

Fortunately, the poor little Italian could not understand one word of this discourse, or even suspect that it was directed to herself; for all the time Susan Palmer talked, she held the little imp on her lap, with her arm around its waist.

But Em. heard all this with dismay, and, if the truth must be told, though she knew the language, she understood no more of it than did the child. It was so unlike her mother!

"Why, mammy dear," she said in a tone of distress, "if you do not wish to keep the poor child you need not do it. Send her back to the magistrate, and he will send her to the alms-house."

"Oh, yes! I *reckon* I will! Send the innercent creetur to the alms-house to live on tainted meat and sour bread! That would be like *me*, wouldn't it? I can't do it, there! I couldn't do it to save my life!" cried Susan Palmer, squeezing the child to her stomach.

"I knew you couldn't, dear mammy," said Em.

"But I'm the *ill*-treatedest poor soul as ever lived on this yeth! *that* I am! just as if my burdens wa'n't heavy enough a'ready, 'dout having *this* burden dropped down on top of me! I think it is a *down-right* sin and shame! I do!" exclaimed Susan Palmer, hugging her heavy new burden to keep her words from hurting it.

"But, dear mother, no one imposes this upon you. You can send—"

"I won't send her nowhere! Catch me a turning a poor, motherless baby like this out o' doors! I would'nt do it—no, not if I hadn't but one loaf o' bread to divide among you all She should have her share of it! So you shut up, Em.! I'm astonished at *you* a wanting any such a cruelty as for to send this pitiful, helpless little orphan baby to the poor-house—that I am!"

"Dear mother, I did not want you to send her away;

but I also didn't want you to feel as if you were put upon."

"Well, there! don't say another word about it! What in the world *is* the use of making such a terrible fuss over it, anyhow, I'd like to know? My gracious alive, gal, *one* child ain't a going to make such a diff'ence in a house *full!* The little mite this child is a gwine to eat ain't a gwine to make nor yet to break us! So you needn't kick up so much fuss over it!"

Poor Em. had not been making the least bit of fuss over anything. Inconsistent Susan, at war with herself, had been making it all. But Em. did not defend herself; she was too happy in having the little waif adopted into the family, to care about herself just then.

"Well, mother dear, since she *is* to stay with us, hadn't you better let me take her up stairs and wash her? Some of little Mollie's clothes that she has outgrown would fit her well, I think," suggested Em.

"Yes, take her away, and make her decent before the father comes in," replied Mrs. Palmer, lifting the child from her lap.

Em. took the docile little creature by the hand and led her up to the little room over the kitchen, occupied as a bed-chamber by herself and the girls.

Here it was a downright delight to this motherly maiden to strip and wash the little waif clean from head to foot, and then to rub her dry until the clear, brown skin glowed; then to comb out and brush the purple-black hair until it glistened; and then to dress the little form in clean underclothing and a clean, faded pink calico slip, and a white apron; lastly, to take her down renovated into her mother's presence.

"Isn't it worth all the trouble just to look at her now, mother!" asked Em., as she sat down and drew the child to her side.

"What have you done with the old clothes, Em.? There may be something catching in them," said the practical laundress.

"Oh, I just rolled them up and raised the window and dropped them into the back yard. I will wash them myself, mother, and then put them into the rag-bag for they are not fit for anything else. And oh! about that! Aunt Monica says she can use up all the rags she can get, cutting them in strips and plaiting them, and making them into door-mats; so I promised we would give her all we did not need for patching," said Em.

"Oh, yes! you would give the last gownd offen your back, and go about in your petticoat the rest of your life! But here's father. So put the dinner on the table."

"All right, mother."

## CHAPTER XXV

### RECEIVING ANGELS

"Welcome the child," the good man said,
"Make room for her at board and bed."

"Hallo! hallo! hallo!" exclaimed John Palmer, as he entered the kitchen and perceived the new addition to the family circle. "What little woman is this? One of Mother Em.'s children?"

"Yes," replied Susan Palmer, relapsing into her discontent—"one of Em.'s pick-ups! I do declare to man, I'm the most put upon 'oman as ever lived in this world!

As if I hadn't children enough of my own 'dout having all the little foreign wagrants in the world hev on top me!"

"Come, come, ole 'oman, it ain't quite as bad as that. This little gipsy is not *all* the foreign wagrants in t' world! So cheer up, and give her a good dinner an' let her go home," said John.

"Well, now, John Palmer, where *do* you expect to go to when you die? And how *can* you hope any good will come to your own childun. When you want to turn this poor, dear, little, homeless, helpless, harmless orphan baby out to perish in the streets! I'm astonished at you, John Palmer! You, a Christian man, who hears the gospel preached every Sunday and goes to communion every month! Why I wouldn't turn this child out, John Palmer—no! not if I hadn't but one loaf o' bread left in the house and didn't know where the next was to come from! I hope, John, as no judgment will fall on your head for your wicked words, I do!"

"Why, good laws alive! what's the matter with the 'oman? Who wants to turn the orphan child out? I don't, the Lord knows. Why, I didn't even know as it *was* an orphan child or as it had come to stay. I just thought that it was one o' them little uns as Em. is always a fetching in to wash and feed. It's welcome enough to stay for me, Susan, 'oman!" said Palmer, heartily.

"There, I knew you would, John, ole man, Lord bless you. And if we *are* put upon, as we *are*, you know, why, we'll just take up the burdens as Providence lays onto us and bear them cheerfully."

"And, after all, Susan, 'oman, this little un is sent us to fill up our measure like. We have got nine children, with two years betune each of 'em, and the youngest, little Molly, is seven, and if we had another it would

have been five years old, which I take to be about the age of this little un.—How old are you, my little 'oman ?" said John Palmer, suddenly, drawing the child to him.

Valencia replied with a babble of broken music.

" I can't make head nor tail of all that," sighed John, adding—" But 'Sich is life ;' and as I was saying to you, Susan, 'oman, this child comes right in to fill up the place of the little angel that never did come."

" Yes, John ! and only think what a saving she has been to us ! we have never had any nusses, nor doctor's bills, nor baby linen, nor soothing syrup, nor nothing to pay for her, and now she comes right in to wear all little Molly's outgrown clothes, and just think what a saving that is also !"

" Certainly it is !" replied John. " And so now let's sit down to dinner. Give me the little un and I'll hold her on my lap and feed her, as it's the first day, to make her welcome like. And may be when it's quite convenient, ole 'oman, you'll tell me where Em. picked up the child, and all about her. What ! shin soup for dinner ? That's good ! I'll warrant you the little gipsy 'll like that ! Won't you, stranger ?" demanded John, as he drew his chair to the table and lifted the child to his knee.

The little creature, ever ready to respond to such kindness as she had never before received in her life, trilled her answer as musically and as unintelligibly as a foreign bird.

" Blessed if I know what she means !" sighed John.

" Why, father, you can see this much—she means she is glad and grateful," said Em.

" So she does, the poor, little mite. And she shan't be glad or grateful for nothing, neither. We'll take care on her, Sue, my dear. *Now, childun !*"

At this signal all the family around the table bowed

their heads and gave thanks to the Lord for what they were about to receive.

Then the father helped them all, and began to feed the little stranger on his knee, as he ate, and to teach her a few words of English.

"See this that I give you in this spoon. This is soup. Say, soup!"

The child looked puzzled.

"*Soup!*" repeated John.

"Zoope," cooed the child, at length comprehending what he wanted her to do.

"That's a lady! Now—*shin soup!*"

"Zin zoope," said the child, smiling all over her face.

"That's it! Now! this that I hold in my hand is bread. Say—bread!"

"Bed," murmured the child.

"There, that will do now. 'Sich is life!' Soup and bread; that will do for the first lesson. Mind you don't let her forget it, Em. And now, mother, tell us where the little creature came from."

Mrs. Palmer told the story of the poor, little Italian as she had heard it from Em. and from the young lieutenant.

"Well!" blowed John, indignantly, when he heard of the cruelty with which the brutal ruffian had abused the child; "hanging would be a downright *honor* to a wretch like that! And as to what would follow after *that*, I don't know. I should think that Satan himself would be ashamed to give such a villyun house room. But —'sich is life!'"

When dinner was over John put on his hat and hurried off to his work at the arsenal.

Susan Palmer, who declared that of late years she never could do any hard work immediately after dinner,

took the tired child and sat down in a rocking chair to rock her to sleep.

Em. cleared away the table and set some of the soup back on the stove to keep warm for the children, who would not be home from their school until four o'clock.

"Now, mother," said Em., as soon as she had set the room in order, "it is too late for me to go to school to-day; but I can go over to Dr. Willet's and see if I can get work for old Aunt Monica."

"Very well, Em. Hurry back, for I shall want you to help me to contrive a sleeping place for this child," replied Mrs. Palmer.

Em. filled a pitcher with beef soup and then put on her bonnet and hastened away.

At the end of the lane she found old Monica sitting at the door of the red brick hut and knitting.

"Oh, Aunt Monica, here is some nice beef soup. It will give you strength. Let me come in the house and pour it out in a bowl for you," she said, pausing.

"Thanky, honey! 'Deed I mighty thankful for this here providence! My goodness, how nice it do smell!" exclaimed Monica, springing up briskly, in spite of her seventy years, and making way for the young girl to enter.

Em. went to the tiny corner cupboard, found a bowl, emptied the soup into it, set it into a plate, laid a large spoon beside it, and placed it on the table.

"Now then, Aunt Monica. Sit up here and let me see you enjoy this, and then I will be off to Dr. Willet's to see about that work for you. I will call as I come back and let you know what success I have."

"Yes, honey. Thanky, honey," said the old woman, as she took her seat at the table and fell to on the soup; "and now, honey, I wants you just to set down on that

there stool, opposide to me, and hear what I got to say to *you*."

Em., amused at the solemnity of this address, yet wondering to what it tended, drew the stool up before the old woman, seated herself, and waited for the oracle.

"Honey, didn't I see a young ge'man followin' arter you down the lane this morning?"

"Yes, Aunt Monica."

"Now, honey, you give me soup, which is good for me, and I takes it werry grateful. Now, I wants to give you counsel, which is better for you, and which I hope you will take it, whether grateful or not."

"I shall be grateful, Aunt Monica, for any counsel you can give me," said Em. gravely.

"Yes, honey. Well, then, Miss Em., don't you let no young ge'man follow arter you, 'specially when he wear gilt shoulder straps, and moves in a speer s'perior to your own. Take an ole 'oman's wice, honey, and *don't*."

"Why, Aunt Monica," said the girl, blushing intensely without knowing why, "this gentleman was following me, indeed, but not for my sake."

"Oh! he wa'n't, wa'n't he? Werry well, den! You'll see!"

"I shall never see him again. Aunt Monica," said the girl, with an involuntary sigh.

"You won't, won't you? Werry well, den. You'll see! But, arter all, I hope and pray as you won't see anything more of him—*he* a walking behind you and a eating of you up with his eyes—a grand vilyun! I was a good mind to heave a bucket full of soapsuds on his head, *that* I was! What call *he* following you down into this lane? You ain't no young lady, and *this* ain't no 'rastocratic place for him to come poking his nose into. I *will* heave a tub full o' suds on top of him next time

he shows his gilt shoulder straps and his impidence here—*that* I will!"

"Oh, Aunt Monica, you make me feel very unhappy, you do indeed. Will you let me tell you why that gentleman came into the lane? It was a noble act of humanity. Did—"

"Yes, I b'lieve in de humanity," interrupted old Monica. "I b'lieve in de humanity if humanity means human nater! Dere's a great deal o' human natur' about that young man, and that I tell you. I ain't been reading faces seventy years 'dout knowin' human natur' in a man's eyes when I see it there."

"Aunt Monica, listen to me. Didn't you see that gentleman leading a poor, little, ragged child by the hand?" inquired the distressed listener.

"Oh! yes, honey, I see that, too. That was nuffin but a 'scuse—that same poor little child as *you* picked up fust, and he 'tended for to take an int'rest in for a 'scuse to follow arter you—eatin' of you up wid his big, black eyes all de time!"

Em. started, not with an altogether painful surprise. She saw the conduct of the young man in a new light, and not an entirely disagreeable one. It was certainly *herself*—*Em.*—whom the young gentleman had first intervened to save from death from the club of the maddened drunkard. Had he afterwards really pursued his interest in the child for *her* sake? It was a wonderful revelation to Em.'s happy ignorance.

"And so, if ever that fellow *do* show his black, hairy face in this lane ag'in, he'll get a shower o' scaldin' hot soap-suds over his gilt buttons, just as sure as my name's Moniky Ann Wyndeworth."

"Aunt Monica, please let me tell you all about it," said Em., and she began and related the whole adventure in the alley, where *she* first rescued the child from

the clutches of the brute who was beating her, and the young lieutenant afterwards saved *her* from falling under the uplifted club of the enraged ruffian.

"Well, honey, it sound all very fair; but for all that don't you 'courage dat young gentleman to follow arter you. Dere's too much human nater in him," said Monica, shaking her old head.

"I shall never see him again, Aunty," sighed Em.

"I hopes you won't honey, that's all I've got to say."

"Well, I am going now. I will call when I come back to let you know the result, and to take back my pitcher," said the girl, rising to leave the hut.

Em. walked thoughtfully on, in the direction of Dr. Willet's house.

It is not certain that under any circumstances Em. could have forgotten the handsome young officer who had that morning saved her life, and had accompanied her home, showing her more respect than she had ever received from any one before; but it *is* certain that the well-meant but ill-spoken warnings of old Monica against this very young man had fixed his image in the girl's mind, and made it impossible for her to forget him.

In a very short time Em. reached the doctor's house, where, it will be remembered, two of her sisters were in service—Ann, a strapping lass of twenty, as housemaid, and Jane, a bouncing girl of eighteen, as nursemaid.

Em. rapped at the servants' door, and was admitted by Ann, who welcomed her warmly, and asked "how they all were at home," telling her at the same time that Jane had gone out with the mistress's children.

Em. answered all questions satisfactorily, and then told her sister the errand upon which she had come.

"Well, now," said Nancy, "see there! Why, you are

just in the nick of time! Mrs. Willet asked me to inquire around for some woman who could come into the house and mend carpets, and curtains, and bed-quilts and blankets before they are packed away for the season; but she will have to come here, because the work is too bunglesome to send out, you know."

"Yes, of course, and that will be better for the old woman too, for she will live well here, and that is what she don't do at home, poor soul. Well, had I better send her to-morrow morning?"

"Yes, early, so she can make a whole day's work; for, mind you, I am sure Mrs. Willet will take her."

"Well, then, good-by, Nanny. I must hurry away. Oh! I had almost forgot to tell you mother's adopted a child!' said Em., turning back to communicate this news.

"Mother's adopted a—!" exclaimed Nan, in open-mouthed astonishment.

"Yes, a little, Italian orphan, the prettiest little creature you ever saw in all your life; but I can't stop now. Come up to-night, if you can get leave, and I will tell you all about it and show you the child."

"Very well. I will come if I can.—There's the door-bell. I must answer it."

"Well, then, good-by, and God bless you!" said Em.; this odd child always added a benediction to her adieux.

Em. hastened down the back alley and came around to the sidewalk just as she heard a familiar voice, speaking on the front stoop, say:

"I am sorry not to have found the doctor and Mrs. Willet at home. Be so good as to tell them that I called to bid them good-by."

"Very well, sir," replied Nanny, as she closed the door upon the departing visitor, who tripped lightly down the door steps.

Em.'s heart stood still and deprived her for a moment of the power of motion, for she found herself face to face with her new acquaintance of the morning.

"Ah! This is an unexpected pleasure!" his eloquent eyes said, as he lifted his cap and looked on her lovely young face.

Em. crimsoned to the edges of her hair, and was vexed with herself for doing so. She tried to reply, and became angry with herself because she could not.

"Is it not late for a young lady to be out and unattended?" inquired the lieutenant, with a smile.

Em., by some miracle, recovered both her speech and her composure, and answered to the point:

"Yes, sir; I suppose it would be late for any young lady to be out: but I am not, either in years or in station, a young lady."

"You are assuredly a young lady, or I do not know one when I see her," responded the officer.

"Good-night, sir," said Em., as she passed on.

"Pray, pause one moment, and do not deem me intrusive. I have no wish to be so. But it *is* late for you to be out alone. The sun is down and it is growing dark. Remember that this morning, in broad daylight, you were subjected to rudeness."

"Yes, sir, and threatened with instant death, which would have been my fate if it had not been for you," gratefully added Em.

"Let that pass. I am happy to have served you. You are going home?"

"Yes, sir."

"My way lies in that direction. Pray permit me the pleasure of seeing you safe, at least, as far as our paths diverge—that is, at the opening of your lane."

"I thank you, sir; but indeed," said Em., remembering the warning of old Monica, and being, therefore,

determined to repulse her new escort, "there is not the least danger, nor am I the least afraid. I have been used to running on errands both by day and by night ever since I was a little child. No one ever harmed me, or even threatened to harm me until this morning and that wouldn't have happened if I had been minding my own business, instead of meddling with that of others," she added, with a smile.

"Yes; but, you little Dona Quixota, if you should happen to see another brute beating a child, you would make it your business to meddle again."

"I suppose I should," laughed Em.

"And you would need your faithful squire to defend you. Come, Miss Palmer, you must really permit me to keep you in sight until I see you safely in your father's house."

"No farther than the entrance of the lane, if you please, sir. I shall be perfectly safe there; and, indeed, I should be safe anywhere. Such an incident as that of this morning is not likely to recur. But I thank you all the same, sir," said Em., not knowing how, without apparent rudeness, to shake off the proffered escort of this young man, to whom she already owed a debt of gratitude.

They walked on, Lieutenant Bruce taking her by the quietest and most retired way, and talking in a manner to make her forget the difference in their rank, the poverty of her lot, even the flight of time, until, at last, they reached the entrance of the lane. It looked as dark as the mouth of Tophet, and breathed as foul an odor. He felt the girl shudder as with a new sense of the deadly atmosphere in which she lived. He pitied her from his soul that she was forced to stay where he could not have breathed in comfort for a moment.

Then and there he resolved that by some means or

other he would get her father's family out of that place and into better quarters without wounding their self-respect with any pretence of patronage.

All this passed in an instant through his kindly and practical mind. Then the sudden wish to say something to comfort and strengthen her inspired him.

"Do not look down, my child. Look up to the starry heavens bending over you," he murmured.

And then he spoke of those worlds of light that none of earth's misery could ever hide or dim, always shining, shining down upon mankind with their promise of eternal compensation for temporal troubles. He told her how the stars had been men's first guides to true ideas of a higher life than this. And he would have talked longer, and she would have listened, but that a nameless fear possessed her, and revealed itself even to him.

"You had better let me see you to your father's door," said the lieutenant, as he paused.

"Oh, no, sir, pray do not think of it. Our paths naturally divide here. I am at home in every part of the lane, and therefore quite safe. Please take my thanks and go on your way," said Em., anxiously, for she dreaded the farther attendance of her new acquaintance, on account of the severe criticisms it would provoke from old Monica, and perhaps even the unjust remarks it might draw from others.

Thus dismissed, the young man raised his hat and silently walked away.

Em. felt that she had wounded his feelings and her own heart ached. She, who would not willingly have hurt the humblest or the most unworthy creature, had pained one who seemed to her to be among the most excellent of the earth, who had saved her life only that very morning, and had showed her nothing but

respect and kindness ever since. She felt that, through fear of criticism, she had made a serious mistake ; for that it would have been more prudent as well as more polite in her to have permitted her escort to take her to her father's house, and enter and make the acquaintance of honest John Palmer.

Em. learned the lesson taught by second thought, and resolved henceforth to have more confidence in her own judgment.

On reaching the little red hut, Em. looked for the old woman on her usual seat in the door.

But Aunt Monica was not there.

So Em. lifted the latch and went in, where she found her *protégée* sitting in a low chair over a few embers.

"Ay, ay, so you have come at last, Miss. Well, I couldn't sit out there waiting for you any longer. The evenings this time o' year is mostly damp and chilly. Well, now, honey, sit down and res' yourself, and tell me what's the p'ospect for work."

"Thank you, Aunt Monica. I haven't got time to sit down. Well, you know where Dr. Willet lives ?"

"In course I do. Wasn't him and his father before him family phersician to old Marse Captain Wyndeworth, and ain't I been in his orfis time and again? Sure I know where he live."

"Well, auntie, you are to go there to-morrow and set in for about a month's work in mending up carpets, curtains, blankets, quilts, and so on, before putting them away for the summer. And you will be in clover there and live on the fat of the land, besides having good wages."

"And all through you, Miss Em.! Lord bless you, child, you are the mother of the poo' !"

"Don't auntie ; you know I am not that."

"You is ! you is !"

"And don't deserve your praise."

"You does! you does!"

"Good-night, auntie! Be sure to go early to the Willets'!"

"I'll be there with my thread-case and old brass thimble by sunrise, honey, and most thankful to you for getting it for me!" exclaimed old Monica.

Em., taking her empty pitcher from the table where it stood waiting for her, ran out of the hut to escape the exaggerated gratitude of the old negress.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

### THE DREAMER.

O'er her brow a change hath passed;
In the softness of her eyes
Deep and still a shadow lies;
From her voice there thrills a tone
Never to her childhood known. HEMANS.

All the little houses in the lane were dark, as if the people had retreated to their back premises—except John Palmer's cottage, from the upper and lower windows of which light streamed, showing that all was active life within.

Em. lifted the latch and entered that front room which, as I have said, was both chamber and parlor in that little house with the large family.

No one was in the front room, but through the open door leading into the back one Em. could see that the latter was full. All the family seemed to be there as-

sembled, and all were making a hospitable fuss over the last addition to their circle.

There was Jack, now a sergeant of marines, stationed with his company at the barracks; Jim, a journeyman hatter, boarding near his business; Ann, housemaid, and Jane, nursemaid at Dr. Willet's; Tom, apprenticed to a carpenter and joiner; Ned, bound to a painter and glazier; and the two little girls Nell and Molly, home from the day-school.

They had the little Italian standing upon a chair, and were gathered around her, vying with each other as to who should show her the most attention.

"Here's Em. now," said Sergeant Jack. "Sister, I was just going to look for you. You mustn't stay out so late another night! You're a deal too pretty to be wandering around by yourself!"

"Why, Em., we didn't start for half an hour after you left the house, and we got here before you!" said Nan.

"Yes, but we walked very fast and sometimes ran," put in Jenny.

"And I sauntered and stopped at Aunt Monica's hut, also. But I was not alone; I had company," said Em.

"'Company!" echoed Jack.

"Yes. Mother, the gentleman who brought little Valencia to you this morning was just coming down Dr. Willet's steps as I was coming out of the gate, and he knew me again, and said, considering what had happened in the morning, he thought it was not safe for me to walk home at that hour of the night alone; and added that he was going my way, and would see me safe; so he came to the head of the lane with me, and would have come farther, only I told him there was no need, and so took leave of him there. Was that right?"

"Yes," said Susan Palmer, and catching John's anxious eye, she added: "Now don't you be looking

so glum, father, putting thoughts into the child's head that would never come there of their own accord. The young man told me himself, when he brought Valencia here this morning, that he was going away to-morrow. Yes, Em., my gal, you did right enough."

"Was that the young gentleman that came to say good-by to Mrs. Willet, just as I was hurrying you off, Em.?" inquired Nan.

"Yes," replied her sister.

"Oh, he's just a splendid young man! He is the nephew and heir to old Commodore Bruce, and Dr. and Mrs. Willet just think the world and all of him. Why, he would speak to a beggar with as much politeness as he would to a king!" exclaimed Nan.

Em. winced just a little, as the thought passed through her mind that there had been nothing particular, after all, in the young man's courteous manner towards herself. He would have behaved in the same way to old Aunt Monica. And then Em. took herself to task for egotism, in feeling annoyed because she had reason to believe that she was not the sole object of Lieutenant Bruce's fascinating politeness.

"Why should he not be affable to all? I am too vain. Besides what is he to me, that I should care what he does?"

The little family party were now, however, breaking up. Nan and Jenny began to take leave by kissing everybody all around.

"Wait, girls; Jim and I will see you safe home; it ain't much out of our way," said Sergeant Jack. "And mind, mother, I shall lay aside ten per cent. out of my pay to support that little foreigner," he added.

"And the same off mine, mother, for the same purpose," said Jim.

"What, boys! after giving me the half of all your

airnings, to go and add a tithe for the child! I think you had better put by somethink for yourself against the time when you will get married, and have childun of your own to provide for."

The two young fellows laughed, but made no other answer than to kiss their mother good-night.

"'Sich is life,'" said John, as he locked the door after his departing children.

And now there was a problem to be solved: Where was the little stranger to be put to sleep? The house had but four rooms in it, and all these rooms were full.

In the front room, (parlor and chamber in one,) on the high bedstead, slept John and his wife. In the little trundle-bed, that was drawn out from beneath it every night, lay the two children, Nelly and Molly. In the upper room slept Nancy Whitlock and Em. in one bed. In the back room, over the kitchen, were the two boys, Tom and Ned.

"Now where was the little one to be put?"

After much debate, during which the child, who understood the drift of the discourse, if not the words, had made signs that she could sleep on the trunk, that she could lie on the door-mat, that she could sleep on the floor, it was decided that if the trundle-bed was large enough for two, it was large enough for three, and little Valencia should sleep with Nell and Molly—to the great satisfaction and delight of the children.

And then, at length, John Palmer called them all together for family prayers, after which they separated for the night, or rather went to bed without much separation.

They were hard workers, hearty feeders, and heavy sleepers in that house; and so they were all soon in the land of oblivion—all except one—and that one was not Ann Whitlock; for the champion worker, feeder

and sleeper there was Mrs. Whitlock, and no sooner did she lay her head upon her pillow and close her eyes than she died entirely dead for about eight hours. She lay like a log from ten at night to six in the morning, and was therefore as quiet a bed-fellow as any living being could be.

The unsleeping eyes were those of Em. The girl had more material for imagination that night than she had ever taken to her pillow before!

Indeed, Em. had never before found any food for fancy. Brought up in a narrow alley, in the most crowded part of the city, among sordid and sorrowful surroundings, in a toiling and self-denying family, Em.'s life had been strangely hard, practical and prosaic; and thence all her conceptions of life were very prosaic, practical and hard.

Confined to that contracted sphere, she had never in her life seen a field or a forest, scarcely ever heard a bird sing, or seen a flower bloom. She had never read a novel, a poem, or a play, and never seen a public exhibition of any sort, except those of the free school examinations, which were then conducted in the cheapest and plainest manner, without music and without recitations of any sort except those of the class lessons.

The life that Em. had led, the life of ceaseless labor and perfect self-denial in the service of her own needy family and of her still more needy neighbors in that wretched lane, had developed her benevolence and conscientiousness to a very high degree, but had left fancy and imagination dormant—dormant, not dead nor absent; for deep down in her nature, without ever having "devoured" a romance, Em. was romantic; without ever having dreamed over a poem, she was poetical; without ever having roamed through a field or forest, or bathed her spirit in the beauty of flowers or the music

of birds, Em. was full of sentiment. Yes! without ever having raised her eyes from the absorbing duties around heart and home to the visible heavens, Em. was full of aspiration—vague, indeed, but very strong.

All this latent romance, poetry, sentiment, aspiration, was destined to be awakened and aroused by the advent of the young man whose acquaintance she had made that day, under circumstances fated to fix him in her memory forever. Nothing had ever come into her monotonous little life that had made so deep an impression upon her mind as this noble, handsome, and courteous young man, whose visible presence seemed lost to her forever, but whose image returned to memory, in reverie, idealized! in dreams, glorified!

And now, on this summer night, when all the household slept heavily, Em lay awake, dreaming of her new friend, dreaming of Ronald Bruce, recalling every word he had spoken to her, every intonation of his voice, every look he had bent upon her, every gesture, every movement. What strong, beautiful eyes he had! large, full, gray and deeply fringed with darkest lashes! What speaking eyes, and how they talked to her! Ah! they had said more than ever his lips had spoken! His lips had talked on many subjects; but what had his grand, beautiful eyes said! Ah, what?

Whatever it was of joy, delight, blessedness, they were saying it still! they were haunting her, they were gazing at her through the darkness; she could see them with her own eyes shut!

In the innocence of her ignorance and inexperience, Em. could not know what danger there was to her own peace in indulging these waking dreams. Even the sharp pang that she sometimes felt in the thought that she should see him no more, did not warn her of danger.

She *had* seen him! She had had the *joy* of seeing

him, and nothing in the world could deprive her of *that* possession.

She could begin from the moment when one blow from his stout stick had sent the club that was aimed at her life flying from the ruffian's hand, and she could live over every word, tone, look, gesture, through all their short acquaintance to the last moment when, at the entrance of the dark and noisome lane, he had pointed her to the starry heavens above, and said:

"Look up! There is no spot of earth so poor, so bare, so sad, so low, but we may lift our eyes above it to the worlds of light beyond! You have no parterres of flowers here, no bowers of roses, no shrubberies, no groves, but, my child, you have the sublimest sight in nature, the starry heavens! Every star is a sun or a world! When you weary of this sad lane, look up at the sun by day or the starry heavens by night. The earth in all its splendor can give you nothing so sublime or beautiful as the heavens by day or night. And even if, for a season, clouds and darkness hide them, you know that they are there, and will soon reappear."

So he had spoken to her, as no one had ever taken the trouble to speak before.

And how had she received his words? She had not replied at all; but when he offered to see her to her father's door, she had repulsed his kindness and insisted on his leaving her then and there.

He had lifted his hat and walked away. He had left her forever. She should never see him more; though she could still see his strong, beautiful, dark-gray eyes, looking on her through the darkness, talking to her—of what?

## CHAPTER XXVII

LOVE.

> You cannot know the good and tender heart,
> It's girl's trust, it's woman's constancy,
> How pure, yet passionate, how calm, yet kind,
> How grave, yet joyous, how reserved, yet free
> As air where friends are—and imbued with love
> The world most prizes—though the simplest.
>
> BROWNING.

With daylight came duty, and henceforth Em. lived two lives—the outward life of action, the inner one of dreams.

She arose early and helped her mother to get breakfast and afterwards to wash the dishes and clean up the kitchen.

Then she went to school.

On her way she passed the red brick hut at the end of the lane, and finding it shut up and locked fast, she knew that its occupant, old Monica, had gone to work at Dr. Willet's.

So another of her *protégées* was provided for, and Em. was so far relieved of responsibility.

In school a busy term was before the pupils—they were preparing for the midsummer examination, which was to come off in the last week of June ; and in two months of hard study they were to make up for the lax

labor of the preceding eight—and then two months of holiday would reward their efforts.

Let me hurry over this part of my story.

Em. had applied herself faithfully to her books ever since she had been at the institution, and now she was at the head of the highest class; but still she studied as diligently as the most negligent was obliged to do; for at the approaching examination she hoped to graduate, to leave school forever, and devote herself exclusively to the service of her poor, hard-working father and mother.

Her busy life, at home and at school, so absorbed her whole time and attention during the day that she had little opportunity to dream of Ronald Bruce.

At the close of every day, she was, to borrow Susan Palmer's hyperbolical expression, "completely worn out," and very glad to lie down; and not only to rest, but to dream, undisturbed, of Ronald Bruce; to recall his image to her mind's eye, to live over again every minute and every incident of their short acquaintance, and nourish her soul with its memory; above all, to meet again those strong, beautiful, dark-gray eyes, so full of goodness, so eloquent of—what?

Ah! what did those speaking eyes—that she could see with her own eyes shut, looking at her through the darkness of her room as plainly as she had seen them with open vision in full daylight—what did they say to her?

What did they express? An aspiration that, if realized, would bless them both with happiness. Was that it? She could not tell.

It was a problem to engage her thoughts, stimulate her imagination, and keep her awake night after night, until physical weariness overcame mental activity, and she slept.

At the midsummer examination, Em. graduated with the highest honors of her school. These were not very high, it must be confessed, for in those days only the rudiments of a good English education were taught in the public schools.

Her father and mother, dressed in their Sunday clothes, were in the audience, delighted spectators of their daughter's success.

"I always said Em. was the smartest as well as the purtiest of all our childun," said the proud father.

"Yes, and she's better'n that; she's the most useful," added the fond mother.

"But now she's got her medal and her premiums she must have a rest. She's been a-studying too hard, poor girl, to win her prizes; but I do suppose she couldn't win 'em without hard work: for 'sich is life!'" said John.

"I don't think as it is all study either," replied Susan Palmer. "Study never went hard with Em. It sort o' come nateral to her; she was so quick to learn everything. But something is the matter with the girl. She doesn't eat enough to keep a kitten alive."

"Oh, if she's offen her feed, you must give her chamomoile tea; it is the best thing in the world for the appetite."

"'Tain't only that, but she has lost all her fine spirits, and don't seem to take the same interest in anything as she used to take."

"Well, if that's the case, I ralely don't know what to do! Lor! how I wish I was able to send the girl in the country for a spell! I don't mind working hard for poor wages, and living from hand to mouth all my life, as long as the childun keep well! But when any of the childun, especially the poor gals, get sick and need change, and I not able to give it to them, then, Susan,

woman, my heart rebels !—it does ! But what's the use o' talking ! 'Sich is life !'"

This low-toned conversation had gone on after Em. had received her medal and her premiums, and had returned to her seat at the head of the graduating-class, and while some of the pupils in the lower classes were receiving their premiums.

Now, however, all the prizes were distributed, and the president of the board of examiners arose in his place to deliver the valedictory.

John and Susan ceased their conversation, and listened respectfully to the address, of which they heard but little and understood less.

When this was over the audience was dismissed, and Em., in her nice white cambric dress and blue sash, and straw hat trimmed with blue ribbon, came down to join her parents.

"Lord bless you, my bright little girl, you have made your mother and me very proud to-day to think that our daughter carried off all the prizes over the heads of girls so much better off in this world's goods. But 'sich is life !' Now, let me tote some of your books, my child, for you do look ready to drop ! Yes ! you have come out'n this battle victorious, but weary ! But, as I observed before, 'sich is life.' You can't have a great victory without great weariness ! So give me your books, my dear, and lean on me arm—heavy !" said John Palmer, as he took Em.'s burden from her and drew her arm within his own.

"That silver medal is an elegant ornimint, Em.," said Mrs. Palmer, looking with much delight at the decoration that hung suspended by a blue ribbon from the neck of the little graduate.

"Oh, yes, mother, it is very pretty, but I have something here that I like so much better."

"What is that, my girl?" inquired John.

"Oh, this!" exclaimed Em., taking from her father's hand a book on Elementary Astronomy. "This! It tells all about the stars! You know we don't study that in school, so I am so glad the trustees gave me this for a premium in geography. Now I can study at home and learn about the stars."

"'Study at home?' No, you won't, my girl! not if I know anything about it! You shall just do nothing but rest yourself, or amuse yourself, for the balance of this summer, which, the Lord knows, I wish I was able to send you to the country for a spell. It would do you good."

"John, we might get her a place at service in the country, if we were to inquire among the gentlemen and ladies we work for," suggested Susan.

"Hum! we might, and then again we mightn't; and if we should, it wouldn't be for the best, maybe! 'Sich is life.'"

Thus conversing they reached home, where all the sisters and brothers, with Mrs. Whitlock and Aunt Monica, were assembled to welcome the party and to do homage to Em.; for it was known that Em. was a candidate for the school honors, and it was expected that she would be the successful one.

Her reception at home was quite an ovation. Every one congratulated her. Her brother Jack, the tall sergeant of marines, brought her a blue parasol—the first parasol Em. had ever possessed in her life. Jim brought her a pair of gray gloves. Ann gave her a hemstitched, linen pocket-handkerchief, and Jane a set of collars and cuffs. The two apprentice boys, Tom and Ned, had clubbed their pocket-money together and bought her a little work-box, completely fitted. Susan Palmer gave her a comb and brush for her own exclusive use—

and this was one of the greatest benedictions to poor Em. Last of all, John Palmer gave his favorite daughter a cheap little chest of drawers to keep her personal property in.

Em. *was* worn down with study and house-work and—dreams; and so she was at this time so weak and nervous that, instead of loudly rejoicing at all this good fortune, she burst out crying, and exclaimed:

"Oh! surely no one, no one ever had such dear, dear parents and sisters and brothers as I have!"

"Why, little sister, haven't you been working hard for us all the days of your little life, and so oughtn't we to do something some time or other, to show our sense of what we owe you?" inquired Jack.

"And what time so good as this, when you have done us all so much credit, going clear over the heads of all the young ladies in the school?" added Jim.

"And when you are leaving school for good, too!" said Mary Ann.

"And come out as a young woman at long last!" said Jenny.

"And so good a girl, and so helpful!" put in Susan Palmer.

"The prop of our declining years! And little you looked like it in the beginning, and you so fair and delicate. But 'sich is life,'" concluded John.

"I think myself as you'd better sit down and eat the supper as I have got ready for you," suggested Mrs. Whitlock.

"Yes, honeys, and try some o' my morella cherry pone, as I 'pared specially in honor o' this day," put in old Monica.

Susan Palmer laughed and took the head of the table, and called her numerous family around her.

After the merry supper was over, the sergeant of

marines and the journeyman hatter prepared to take leave, but Nan and Jenny conscripted both to see them safely home to Dr. Willet's.

John Palmer, however, stopped them all to family prayers, and then dismissed them with his blessing.

After their departure, the tired members of the family left behind bade each other good-night.

Em. went to her room, and laid her books out upon the little chest of drawers.

"Now, Miss Emolyn, afore you turn away from that bury, just you look at yourself in the glass," said the solemn voice of Mrs. Whitlock, who, seated on a low chair, was engaged in taking off her own shoes and stockings.

Em. turned around and gazed at the old woman in surprise.

"I didn't tell you to look at me, but to look in the glass. Now look in the glass and see what you see, and then listen to what I have got to say to you on this eventful day," continued Ann Whitlock.

Em. smiled and did as she was bid.

She had never looked in so large a mirror as this that crowned her bureau. Her little dressing glass had always been a little four-inch square mirror, that hung upon a tack against the wall over the children's washstand, and had barely given her a rather distorted image of her face.

Now she looked for the first time into a larger field of mirror that reflected her whole form and face, so that she saw before her a lovely maiden, with a stately little head covered with an aureole of sunny, golden-brown ringlets; with a broad, full, snow-white forehead; delicately penciled, dark-brown eyebrows; large, full, dark-blue, tender eyes, veiled with long, thick, black eyelashes; a little, straight, patrician nose; a

small, plump, red mouth ; a rounded, slightly protruding chin, and a perfectly turned throat, beautifully moulded bust, and sloping shoulders and tapering waist ; and this lovely face and form gracefully adorned by the simple dress of clear white muslin and the blue sash and blue hair-ribbons.

Em. blushed with delight at her own beauty, and with shame that she should have such delight in it.

"Well, you see yourself, don't you ?" inquired Nurse Whitlock.

"Yes," answered the girl, in a very low voice, as she went away to the uncurtained front window and looked out upon the starry heavens as if with an effort to lift her thoughts above such vanities.

"Now listen to me," said Mrs. Whitlock. "Don't you see that natur' has made you different from your sisters and brothers, Miss Emolyn ?" solemnly inquired Ann Whitlock.

Em. hesitated, and her blush deepened as she finally answered :

"My dear sisters and brothers are stout and healthy and handsome, besides being honest and skillful and affectionate, thank Heaven !"

"Oh ! yes, I dare say, but you are different from 'em all. You are lovely and delicky, and clever and lady-like ! You can't deny ! You are naturally a young lady! Anybody would see that in a minit to look at you ! Now, Miss Emolyn—"

"Oh ! please, Aunty Whitlock, don't call me Miss Emolyn, and don't talk to me in this way ! It is not right," pleaded the girl in much embarrassment.

"Yes, it is right ! Let who will call you Em., henceforth I shall call you Miss Emolyn ! You ain't a child any longer, you are a young lady."

"A young woman, aunty," said Em.

"A young lady! or else I never saw one. But it wasn't to pass no idle compliments that I wanted to speak to you, Miss Emolyn. I wanted you to look at yourself, to see yourself, to know yourself, and then I wanted to put you on your guard *against* yourself and against others. *Now* do you understand me?"

"No, indeed, aunty. I only understand that you mean well;—that is all."

"Well, then, listen here, and listen sharp, because I'm sleepy and want to go to bed. You've 'eft school forever to-day, haven't you?"

"Yes, aunty."

"And now you are a young lady, aint you?"

"A young woman, aunty."

"A young lady, I say, and never contradict me again, Miss Emolyn! It ain't manners to an elder!—Now, then, you're a young lady, and you'll be having the young men running after you!"

"Oh! no, I will not, aunty!"

"I tell you, you *will*, now don't contradict me again; I tell you it aint polite to an elder! You'll have the young men running arter you, same as they run arter Mary Ann and Jane! It is naturel."

Em., forbidden to dispute, looked down in silence and confusion of face.

"Now you know the lot that run after Mary Ann and Jane—soldiers from the Marine Barracks, and workmen from the Arsenal—"

"Yes, aunty, and they were all good, honest young men; the soldiers were brother Jack's comrades, and the workmen were from the same shop with father."

"Oh! yes, I dare say. Well, and Mary Ann is a-goin' to marry Corporal Smith, and Jane is going to have Jones, the machinist."

"Yes, aunty, both good matches, father says."

"Ay, ay, for *them*, Miss Emolyn; but as for *you*—and this is the very *jit* of the whole matter I meant to speak to you about—you musn't let any of them young men run arter *you*, Miss Emolyn, and you must never, never think of marrying one on 'em!" solemnly concluded Mrs. Whitlock.

Em. gazed at the speaker in downright consternation at the contingency she had conjured up.

"Who, *I*!" she exclaimed, "*I* marry one of these! Oh! Mrs. Whitlock, how could you even imagine such a possibility?"

"Well, there! there! don't fly offen the handle! I might have a-knowed you wouldn't a took up long o' none sich!" cried the old woman.

"Stop, Mrs. Whitlock! Do not suppose that I am so vain and silly as to look down upon the worthy young companions of my sisters and brothers. How should I dare to do so? But in this matter of marriage, aunty, pray, *pray* never mention it to me again. I shall never marry. That is fixed, and irrevocably fixed," said Em., so gravely that her mentor replied:

"Well, honey, I think under your circumstances that is a good resolution, and I think as you will keep it!—that is, unless things greatly change for the better, as I don't see as they're likely to do. Now I can go to sleep with an easy conscience," concluded Mrs. Whitlock, as she tumbled into bed, turned her face to the wall, and died entirely dead for the next eight hours.

Em. felt herself utterly alone. Every one in the house was fast asleep. The old woman in the room was temporarily annihilated.

Em. was entirely alone.

She returned to the bureau to examine her books—notably her book on astronomy; interesting—most interesting to her, because it treated of the "starry

heavens" to which Ronald Bruce had directed her studies.

To see it better she lighted a second candle, and placed one on each side of the looking-glass.

In doing this, she involuntarily raised her eyes, and caught another glimpse of the beautiful face and form reflected there, set off as it had never been before, by the pure white muslin dress and blue ribbons.

Now Em. must have been more or less than human not to have seen, recognized and delighted in her own beauty; yet, in true humility, she ascribed the effect to her dress, and breathed this girlish aspiration:

"*Oh, if he could only see me now!* He thought me well-looking, I know he did, in my blue calico frock and white cotton sun-bonnet—how much better looking he would think me now!—Oh, no," she added, quite *mal-apropos* to her former words. "Oh, no, Aunty Whitlock need not be afraid! I shall never marry one of *them!* I shall never marry any one at all," she added, with a sigh.

Then she opened her "Elementary Astronomy," and first looked at the illustrations, and then began and read until her candles burned out. Even after that she went and sat down at the uncurtained window and looked out.

Below was the fetid lane; opposite was a delapidated hovel, where, late as it was, a man and his wife were quarreling in their drink.

Over all looked the "starry heavens."

"But, ah," said Em., with a moan of pity, "what right has one to look away from the sin and misery of the poor earth to those worlds of light? We should rather look down on this poor earth and try to redeem it from sin and relieve it from misery! Oh, if I were only rich, so I might give that man and his wife so much strong

coffee and strong beef soup that they should never long for liquor, and might repair their dwelling, and make it such a pretty home they would never feel like quarreling in it."

It was a childish thought, and in some respects she was still a child.

She sat by the window with her eyes fixed, not on the starry heavens, but on the poor hovel across the way, watching, fearing lest that drunken quarrel should terminate in some disaster—watching, fearing, praying, until at length the angry voices subsided, the light went out, and all was dark and silent.

Then Em. with a sigh of relief, undressed in the darkness and went to bed, murmuring to herself:

"Ah, Ronald Bruce! It is easy to see that you were born in affluence and raised in luxury, or you never would be able to look so far above the troubles of this world."

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### CHANGES.

"She took up the burden of life again."

WHITTIER.

With her festive dress, Em. put aside her daydreams and resumed her domestic duties.

She became her mother's most efficient help, taking her full share of the cooking, washing, ironing and scrubbing.

John expostulated.

"The girl grows paler and thinner. She needs rest," he urged.

"Yes, rest from so much reading. Hard work is the

best sort of rest from that there," replied the practical Susan.

"That is true, dear father, hard work is the best thing for me," added Em., who was trying in active employment to dispel her haunting dreams, that long indulgence had rendered painful.

"Well, well, my darling, I suppose you and your mother know best; but I wish I was able to send you to the country, that is all," said John with a sigh.

"I wish we were *all* able to go to the country, dear father, for I am sure I could not be happy to go there myself and leave you all in this strifling lane. Oh, how beautiful the country must be, dear mother. I was down on Water street, you know, yesterday, to take home some washing, and I got a view of the country across the river. I saw the wooded hills and valleys on the other side. Oh, father, it looked like heaven to me. It was not like the city. It reminded me of that lovely hymn we sing in church sometimes:

"'Sweet fields beyond the swelling flood
Stand dressed in living green;
So to the Jews old Canaan stood,
While Jordan rolled between.

I never felt the beauty of that hymn so much as I did yesterday. Ah! if we could only all of us live in the country, how happy we should be. Ah! when I see a market-woman going home in her cart, with her vegetable and fruit baskets, some empty, some half full, piled up around her, ah! how I wish I was up beside her, going home to the farm-house and garden, and orchard, and fields, and woods. Yet I know I should not be contented unless you were all there with me! Oh, if we could only live in the country!"

"Child!" said Susan Palmer, "you wouldn't believe

it maybe, but years ago, before you was born, your father had a splendid offer to go down South, and as overseer on to a plantation, and he wouldn't take it."

"No," said John, "the orkuppation didn't suit me; and, besides, I'd took a liking to this house, where I brought Susan home when we was first married, and where Jack and Jim and Nan and Jenny had been born, and I couldn't bear to leave it. I felt like an oyster, child, and like the house was my shell; and if I was forced out'n it I should die like a shucked oyster!"

"Yes, and it's my belief, if the house was to catch a fire, John would stay in it and be a roasted oyster, sooner 'n he'd budge!"

"Dunno about that, ole 'oman, said John, as he took up his hat and walked off to his work, for this conversation had taken place at the breakfast-table.

As the summer advanced, the season became very sickly. There was a long midsummer drought, and the drainage of the city, imperfect in the best and most favorable circumstances, became wholly inefficient for all purifying purposes.

The cholera broke out in the most crowded, uncleanly and ill-ventilated portions of the city and spread from them to the suburbs.

So sudden was the appearance of the scourge, so rapid and fatal its progress, that the greatest consternation prevailed.

All who could leave fled to the country. All public buildings were closed, except the hospitals and dispensaries; all places of business shut up, except doctors' offices and druggists' shops; all work suspended, except the undertakers.' Physicians were hurrying from house to house, both night and day, scarcely ever taking time to go home for a regular meal, but drop-

ping in at any convenient place for a short lunch, when the calls of appetite became exigent.

Many families kept refreshment tables standing in their parlors for these same half-demented doctors.

Many non-professional persons were "conscripted" into the medical service, and armed with a flask of brandy, a bottle of laudanum, a box of mustard and a box of calomel pills, with a few brief instructions to treat sudden cases of this plague.

Among the busiest of these physicians' *aids-de-camp* was John Palmer. Dr. Willet had fitted him out with medicines and instruction, that he might do the best he could in sudden cases, where no better help was to be had. John had been an attentive and intelligent pupil, and had followed the doctor's directions in all cases, though, terrible to tell, at least nine-tenths of his patients died.

One day John's master, the doctor, ran afoul of him in the lane.

"Here, Palmer, I was looking for you. Take this lancet. Bleed every one when first attacked. Take from a gill to three half pints of blood, according to the age and strength of the patient. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir," said John.

"Very well. Bleed every case! Every case, mind! *For I have lost every case where I have not bled!*"

Poor John thought he had discovered the cure for cholera then, certainly. He followed the doctor's instructions to the letter, though unfortunately with no better success than before he had heard and acted on them.

Another day John ran up against the doctor on Water street.

"Hello, Palmer! You are the very man I want to see. Have you got that lancet about you?"

"Yes, sir, I always carries it, to have it handy."

"Did you obey my orders?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"With what result!"

"Every one on 'em died, sir, I'm sorry to say!"

"Give me that lancet! Don't you bleed another cholera patient for your life! Every patient I have bled has died."*

Poor John looked not only "perplexed," but "in despair;" and scarcely less so was his master in medical science.

All other cares in life seemed to have ceased except the one care to save the stricken.

Very soon Susan Palmer and Ann Whitlock left the family to the sole charge of Em., and went out with John to nurse the sick.

Night after night the poor girl stayed in the house alone with the three little children, Nellie, Molly and Vennie, as little Valencia was called for brevity. And she spent these nights often in prayer for the ill that they might recover, and for the well that they might be spared by the terrible scourge.

At last the cholera reached the lane, where it found abundance of congenial food to feed upon.

John and Susan Palmer, Ann Whitlock and old Monica, whose regular, temperate and cleanly habits saved them from the pestilence, were all, of necessity, drafted into the service of the sick in the lane; but notwithstanding the best attention of these volunteer nurses, guided by the best skill of the attending physicians, ten to twelve cases proved fatal.

* This was a true incident; and, indeed, those of my older readers who remember the first appearance of Asiatic cholera in our cities in 1833, well know that this picture of perplexed medical skill is not overdrawn.

Let us not linger over these dreadful scenes.

The pestilence that had made its first appearance in the latter part of August, raged with all devouring fury through the whole of September, and only began to decline in October. Then, happily, its fall was as rapid as its rise had been. So that on the twentieth of that month the health statistics reported not one case of cholera in the city.

Public buildings were re-opened; shop-window shutters were taken down; business recommenced; work was resumed; but, oh, the number of black dresses that appeared in all the places of worship on Sunday!

In Laundress Lane two-thirds of the poor houses were empty! The parents were gone to their long homes; the poor children were taken away by relatives, or consigned to orphan asylums. The whole aspect of the place was desolate and depressing, though cleaner than of yore.

The memorable cholera summer was succeeded by a severely cold and hard winter. The short-lived business activity of the autumn was followed by a financial crisis, caused by the grasping dishonesty of some large capitalists, and causing a deep depression in trade that threw thousands out of employment. In the closing of large factories and work-shops the mechanics and laborers felt the pressure more heavily than others. It did indeed seem that famine would follow its brother, pestilence.

John Palmer was one of the last to leave his work and then, even as the good habits of the family had saved them from illness in the time of cholera, so they saved them from want in the time of scarcity. They had always denied themselves enough to lay by a little "for a rainy day."

Besides, their two dutiful elder sons, Sergeant Jack,

of the Marine Corps, stationed at the Garrison, and Jim, the journeyman hatter, both being unmarried, and both economical in their habits, were able and willing to help their parents.

So John Palmer's family did not suffer.

At Christmas, notwithstanding the hard times, the two elder daughters were married. For in matrimonial matters among the working-classes there is seldom any "postponement on account of weather," whether atmospherical or financial.

Nan went home with her young corporal to his quarters at the barracks, and Jenny went with her little machinist to live with his father and mother until a revival of business should enable them to go to housekeeping.

John Palmer occupied his time with patching up his old house, which, from having lived in so long, he had come to regard as his own, though at the first of each month he paid the stipulated five dollars to his landlord.

The weary winter passed as the terrible summer had, and spring came with its resurrection unto life, not only of nature, but of active business.

But what of our little heroine in all this time?

The preceding year of great trial for every one had been a severe discipline to her; it had forced her to put away "childish things," girlish dreams, and devote her whole mind to the sternest realities of life.

Yet now, as the beautiful spring revived all nature, it re-awakened all those vague dreams, aspirations and unsatisfied longings of the spirit which had so disturbed her peace. Her coarse surroundings, her rude associates wounded and shocked the refinement and delicacy of mind and body that seemed born in her. Her roughest works, however willingly undertaken and

patiently performed, hurt her. Her rugged companions, though loving and beloved, were so uncongenial in many ways, that there were moments when they seemed almost estranged from her. Her whole soul longed for a dwelling-place better than the wretched lane; for companions more intellectual than any she could find there.

"Oh, if the country among hills and valleys, woods and fields, and with people like—like Ron—No! She would not think such thoughts! They were ungrateful! They were wicked!—Her dear, good father—her hard-working, self denying, affectionate father—was he not as worthy to be honored as the most refined and intellectual gentleman in the world? And her gentle, patient mother! Was she not as worthy to be loved as the finest and daintiest lady in the land? And was not the old house their home, and the lane their neighborhood? And oh! was not she herself, their daughter, an unnatural and thankless monster to long for any other place, or any other persons? She would do so no longer. She would love her parents loyally, and content herself with the dwelling-place that pleased them.

This was certainly a good resolution; but every one of any experience in life knows this for a certainty—that just as soon as we form a good resolution, Satan sends a great temptation to test it.

One day in the "merry month of May" Em. had been down on Water street to take home some washing. She had lingered to look on the distant view of the wooded hills across the river, now more beautiful than at any other season of the year.

Gazing on them, she murmured the words of another favorite hymn—hymns were the only poems poetical Em. had ever read:

"On Jordan's banks I stand,
And cast a wistful eye
To Canaan's fair and happy land,
Where my possessions lie.

"There everlasting spring abides,
And ever blooming flowers,
Death, like a narrow sea divides
This heavenly land from ours."

"How like the hymn that is! And oh! how like heaven! Shall I ever see the country, the beautiful country any nearer than I do now? Or is that lovely vision across the river any real place at all? Or is it only a beautiful illusion, a hallucination? Ah! if I could only go across the river and see! But I could cross the river of death and get to heaven about as soon as I could get there," she sighed, as she turned her back to the river, and, to make up for lost time, walked swiftly towards her home.

Never looked the lane so narrow, so foul, so repellant, as when she turned into it.

Old Monica sat at her cottage door, engaged in patching meal-bags for a miller for whom she now worked.

"I tell you, Miss Em., if some fire aint done clensify this yer place, we'll have de cullerrer agin this season," she said, sniffing.

"I do not think anything would purify it but a wasting and destroying fire, Aunt Monica," answered the girl despondently, as she hurried on toward her home.

There a great surprise and a great temptation awaited her.

In the front room sat Mrs. Dr. Willet, with a newspaper in her hand, engaged in animated conversation with Susan Palmer.

The lady had just finished speaking in a very energetic way, and the laundress was answering:

"Yes, we *should* miss her dreadfully! I ralely don't know what I should do without her! And as for her father—well, there!—I believe it would half break his heart. But still, if it was for the girl's good! Oh! there she is now! Let her decide for herself! Come in, Em.! Here is Mrs. Willet come to see you! She has got some news for you!"

"Good morning, madame," said the girl, respectfully greeting the lady as she entered the room.

"Mrs. Willet has been looking out for your interests, Em., and she's got a splendid offer for you of a situation out in the country, which you will be a big fool if you do not jump at, that's all," said Susan Palmer, suppressing any selfish objection she might have to the loss of Em.'s services.

"I thank you very much for thinking of me, madame," said Em., bending her head.

"Well, then, this is it, my dear girl," said the lady, opening the newspaper, and reading:

"'WANTED.—A young person as nursery-governess to a family of children from three to seven years of age. She must be a member of a church, and capable of teaching the rudiments of an English education. Apply by letter to Mrs. B. D. F. Fair Banks, Fairfax County, Virginia, stating terms, and enclosing references."

"Now, my dear child, you see by the date that this advertisement has been in for more than a month, though I never noticed it until to-day, and never should have noticed it at all had not my attention been called to it by a letter from Lieutenant Bruce, the nephew of Commodore Bruce, an old friend of ours."

As the lady spoke, Em. grew warm and cold, her color came and went, and she trembled so much that she had to sit down.

Neither her mother nor their visitor noticed her emotion, however.

"Well, my dear," continued the lady, "this advertisement was put in by Mrs. Bernard Delancy Fanning, the elder sister of Lieutenant Bruce, with whom he happens to be spending his leave of absence. It seems that, after a month's advertising, she has not found any one to suit her. She then applied to her brother for help. He wrote to me and requested me to seek you out and engage you for his sister, if it were possible. Now, my dear, I know you would just exactly suit the place and the place you. It is only to teach little bits of children to read and write and cipher, with perhaps a little elementary geography, history and grammar. And you would have a beautiful home! The house is lovely and the grounds a perfect paradise—sloping from the woods to the banks of the river. You could have no idea what a heavenly place it is, unless you could go there yourself."

"Oh, yes, I can see it. I can see it in my mind's eye!" breathed Em., involuntarily, with a deep sigh like an aspiration.

"I know you would like the place, and I am very sure that they would like you. You would be very happy there; and, oh, Mrs. Palmer," said the kind-hearted lady, turning in earnest appeal to the laundress, "it would be such a great thing for your daughter!"

"I know it would. She must take it if her father will consent. I am sure I am thankful to you and Lieutenant Bruce, too, ma'am, for your kindness in thinking of my girl, to give her such a lift in life as that. And though I do say it, madame, which is her mother, Em. is

worthy of the same, and will do credit to yours and the lieutenant's recommendation."

"I have no doubt of it. When shall I know your decision?" inquired the lady, as she arose to take leave.

"Oh, dear ma'am, you may consider of it quite settled *now*. No sensible girl—and Em. *is* a sensible girl—could refuse such an offer. It's only the mere formation of asking her father, and he'd consent if it was to take off his head, poor fellow, for Em.'s benefit."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

SACRIFICE.

And can she now, renounce the boundless store
Of beauty nature to her children yields—
The verdant woodland, the bright river's shore,
The shade of grove, wild flower of the fields,
All that the splendid sun of morning gilds,
And all that echo to the songs of even,
All that the mountain's sheltering bosom shields,
And all the high magnificence of heaven?

BEATTIE.

After the departure of the lady, the laundress turned and looked at her daughter.

Em. sat with her hands folded and her eyes fixed upon the floor in deep thought.

Did she want to accept this tempting offer? Did she understand all that it meant for her?

Ah! yes, yes, she longed to avail herself of it; she appreciated all the good it would bring her; she felt it as a response to all those cravings for a better life of

which she vaguely dreamed. She knew that it would give her all that she so ardently desired to possess—a refined home, intellectual companions, beautiful surroundings in natural scenery, space, liberty, independence, that would enable her to buy books, to dress neatly every day. And then it would give her a chance of sometimes seeing—or hearing—Ronal— No! she must not think of that. She would not think of that.

"Em.! *what's* the matter with you? Are you stupid? You have heard all that has been done for you, and you have not opened your mouth!" exclaimed Susan Palmer, impatiently.

"I did thank the lady, dear mother, and most sincerely too," answered the girl.

"Well, I know you did *that*, you couldn't do no less, but you haven't said whether you *would* like to go, or whether you *wouldn't* like to go, nor nothink! And it seems to me's if you didn't understand! Why, this is one of the very greatest lifts as ever was offered to a poor girl!—to be a *governess*, don't you hear! In a rich house, too! where you wouldn't be treated as a dependent, but as one o' the family, and 'sociate long o' ladies and gentlemen! And to tell the holy truth, Em., if you *are* my own child, I think you might easy pass for a lady born, yourself," concluded Mrs. Palmer, looking with pride upon her daughter.

"Mother, dear, it is only as nursery-governess that I am wanted, to teach little children who are too young for the school-room," said Em., modestly.

"Still, being the children's teacher, you would be treated like one o' the family and 'sociate with ladies and gentlemen."

"Yes, mother, I know."

"And do credit to yourself, and *them too!*" proudly exclaimed Mrs. Palmer.

Em. blushed painfully and knew not what to reply.

"Well, *are* you going to go, or are you *not?*" demanded Susan.

"Dear mother, let us hear what father has to say first."

"Well, to be sure! Of course, John Palmer is going to say that you shall go, if you want to go! When did your poor father ever stand in his children's light, I want to know? But, there! we'll wait till he comes! And when you go up stairs, you take out your white muslin dress, Em., for I must do it up rale scrimptious for you to carry away with you to wear of evenings, when they have company. And you must have two ginghams, a blue one and a laylock, one to wear every day. And you ought to have a black silk to go to church with the family o' Sundays. And I think maybe your two brothers might club together and get you one. I must see about it," concluded Susan Palmer, as she arose and went into the kitchen to prepare the midday dinner.

Em. hung up her bonnet and sat down to a large basket full of stockings that it was her task to darn.

Oh, how the beautiful new life tempted her! How it beckoned, and smiled, and coaxed her! How it showed her the lovely country-house, with its background of dark and heavily wooded hills rising to the sky!—with its foreground of green and flowery lawns and shady grounds sloping to the water's edge!—the broad river's bank! And within the house, elegant surroundings, refined associations, intellectual companions, free access to books, and time to read them, an open view of the whole blue empyrean by day and the starry heavens by night—the starry heavens of which Ron— Oh, no, no, no! she must *not* let her thoughts run on him! No, she must think only of her good father, of her dear mother! Would they miss her much? she asked herself.

Ah, yes! she felt that they would sorely miss her, would grieve after her, though they were so generous they would never let her know it.

For had she not heard her mother say, as she came up to the house that morning:

"As for me, I don't know what in the world I should ever do without her; and as to her father, I do believe it would half break his heart. Still, if it is for the girl's good—"

The entrance of Em. had arrested the words; but surely she had heard enough to learn that her absence would be painfully felt by her parents. And she knew she must not seek her own happiness at the cost of pain to them. Still she had not the heroism to decide against herself without taking *one* chance—the chance that her father might appreciate all the good that must come to her in that offer, and so insist upon her accepting it.

At noon John came home to his dinner, and when the family were gathered around the table Susan suddenly announced the good fortune that had been offered to Em.

John stared for a minute in speechless astonishment.

Mrs. Whitlock, who was present, clapped her hands together with a loud report, exclaiming triumphantly:

"There! Now! Didn't I always tell you so? That girl was born to be a lady! This is but the first step in the ladder, bless you! When she gets among ladies and gentlemen, they will see as she's naterally one of theirselves, and as purty and deliky as she is she may marry a fortin yet! You hold up your head as high as the highest on 'em, honey, as you've got a right to!"

"Oh, aunty dear, please do not say such things about me!" said the girl.

"No—don't be putting such nonsense in the child's

head! It might be the ruin of her," added Susan Palmer.

"How far off is this same said Fair Banks?" inquired John Palmer.

"About sixty miles down the river," answered Susan.

"How do you get to it?"

"The doctor's lady says by the steamboat. There ain't no wharf, but they land by a rowboat."

"Ooome," said John. "What does the child say herself about going?"

"She don't say anything, because she don't know what's for her own good. But, John, I tell you if she don't want to go, she ought to be made go!" exclaimed Susan.

And thereupon she launched into an enthusiastic description of Fair Banks and the Fanning family, and all the great benefits that must accrue to their daughter from becoming a member of their household.

"Yes, it's all werry fine," said John, "all werry fine! Still, it's a long way off, and hard to get at, and they are all strangers, and we don't know nothing personal about them. Still, if my child hankers arter the place, why, I won't be the man to prevent her taking of it, on trial, anyways. Ef she don't like it, or they don't treat her well, or she gets home-sick, she can come back."

"Now, John Palmer, you ought to know as our daughter ain't one to put her hand to the plough and look backwards! What she undertakes she is agoing through with! Mind that! She ain't said nothing yet; but when she *does* say anything, she's agoing to stick to what she says, and carry out what she begins," said Susan.

"When do they want her to go?" inquired John.

"Oh, immediate. Mrs. Doctor says, just as soon as we can pack her off."

"Well, Em., it is just as you say yourself, my girl. I have done the best I could, my child, and I'm willing to keep on doing for the sake o' having you near me. And if it was in the city here, or near the city, I shouldn't hes'tate one minute. I should be the first to tell you to go and better yourself. But as it is so far away, and so hard to get at, why I ralely can't tell you to go, my girl! I can't! I can only leave it to yourself to do as you please. The land knows I have got little enough to give you, so I might as well give you your own way!"

Em., who was watching her poor father closely, saw that the grey, stubble-bearded chin quivered, and the dim eyes filled with tears. She noticed, too, that his plate of pea-soup stood untasted before him, although it was a favorite dish.

It was just as she had expected. The very idea of parting with her was enough to half break his poor, old, weak and tender heart.

All wish to leave him for any other person, or any better life, suddenly, for the time being, fled from her mind.

She arose from her seat and went around to him, drew his gray head down upon her bosom, pressed her soft cheek against his, and whispered:

"I will not go and leave you, father dear. There is nothing in this world worth leaving you for, for there is nothing in the world so good as home-love."

John put his arm around her, and drew her closer to him, as he looked around, and said:

"Now, that's settled! Rich people can buy a many things, but they can't buy the poor man's darter away from her daddy, can they, my lass?"

"Never, father!" exclaimed Em., kissing his wrinkled brow.

"You stand in the girl's light, you old fool, you!" angrily exclaimed Ann Whitlock.

"He don't! He don't! Nothing would tempt me to leave him now," retorted Em.

"And you everlasting a pretending as if you wished you was able to send her to the country, and now that there is such a splendid opportunity you won't let her go. There's consistency!" cried Susan.

"That was last year, when she was so much under the weather. I never meant that I wished her to go so far away as all this comes to, but only across the river. Besides, I do not hinder her from going now, if she wants to go."

"But I do not want to leave you, father," persisted Em.

"I know you don't, my girl. And you sha'n't leave me neither; not so long as I've got an arm to work for you. And if so be there's anything you want as you haven't got, my girl, just you let me know what it is, and you shall have it, if I have to work ten times harder than ever to get it for you. You're not to leave your old father. That's settled once for all. And now I can eat my dinner in comfort and go back to my work with courage," said John, as he fell upon his soup with a good appetite.

Susan Palmer and Ann Whitlock would have continued to contest the point, only they were hungry and their soup was cooling. And luckily before they satisfied their voracious hunger John Palmer had finished his dinner, clapped on his hat and gone to his work.

Not to leave her kind patroness in suspense, Em. put on her bonnet that afternoon and walked over to the doctor's and told the lady of her decision, based upon her father's objection to part with her for so long a time and distance.

Mrs. Willet was very much disappointed, not to say disgusted.

"I think Mr. Palmer is wrong, and very wrong. I hope he will reconsider his resolution. I shall keep the place open for you a week longer," she said.

"I thank you, dear madame; but I must beg that you will not do so. This decision is irrevocable. I could not leave my father now. He is old and worn—much more so than his age would warrant—because he has worked so hard for us all. I will never leave him," gravely replied Em.

"My dear girl, you are pronouncing your own death-sentence. And worse than a death-sentence, since it is a death in life to which you doom yourself. You cannot be so blind, Emolyn, as not to see that you are by nature utterly unfitted for the place you fill. Every one who sees *you* sees *that*. Ronald Bruce saw it. Even Ronald Bruce! Though I dare say he is just about as thoughtless as any other young man! But he saw that much, and therefore he interested himself to get this position for you in his sister's family. He will be very much disappointed to hear that you have rejected it," said Mrs. Willet, with unmistakable regret.

"I thank—I am very sorry," began Em., a little incoherently; but then her voice failed and she turned towards the window to hide the emotion she could not wholly suppress.

"Never mind, my dear girl; do not distress yourself. Your motive was a good and commendable one, though somewhat overstrained," said the lady, kindly.

Em. struggled for self-control, and when she had succeeded in attaining it, she turned to the doctor's wife and said:

"I hope you know how much I thank you, madame, for the benevolent interest you have taken in me."

"I know that you have a very grateful disposition, Emolyn, and that you would be rather apt to overrate than underrate a service done or intended you! But, in fact, it was to my young friend, Ronald Bruce, that you were indebted for this offer, which, by the way, will do you no good at all, since you feel obliged to decline it."

Em., making a successful effort to steady her voice, then added:

"I hope, madame, that when you see, or write to—to Lieutenant Bruce, you will tell him how very grateful I am, and how grieved I feel that I cannot profit by his kind efforts in my behalf."

"Yes, certainly. I shall have to write and tell Mrs. Delancy Fanning of the ill success of my mission, and I will deliver your message by the same letter;—though I doubt, after all, whether young Bruce will be at Fair Banks when my letter arrives."

"Does he not spend the summer with his sister, then?"

This question broke involuntarily from the lips of Em., who blushed deeply the instant she had asked it.

But the lady noticed nothing unusual either in the question or in the re-active effect it produced upon the questioner. She answered quietly:

"Oh, no, indeed! His leave was almost over when he went down there. It was a farewell visit, I presume. He expects to be ordered to the Mediterranean."

Em. then respectfully took leave of the doctor's lady and came away.

And, somehow, her sacrifice did not seem half so great, nor her disappointment half so deep, now that she knew Ronald Bruce was not to be at Fair Banks any longer.

She walked rapidly home; but just as she reached the entrance of the lane she was accosted by old Monica,

who was seated, as was her custom of a summer evening, at the open door of the little red hut.

"Come in, Miss Em., and tell your ole Aunt Moniky all about it! Here's Missus Ann Whitlock been a 'porting of it about as you has 'fused one of de finest offers as ever was made to a poor, young girl, to go for a nuss guberness in a rich lady's fam'ly, where you'd be treated like a darter ob de house! Now, Miss Em., I don't tend for to beliebe all I hear, so you come and tell me de trufe ob it," said the old creature, rising and leading the way into the hut.

When they were both seated, Em. told her all about the offer of Mrs. Delancy Fanning, and the reason why it was refused.

"You was in de right ob it, Miss Em.! You was 'tirely in de right ob it, not to go back on de poor ole father for any yethly wantage that could be offered to you. And you'll get your 'ward, honey! Mind, I tell you, you'll get your 'ward! Listen to me, Miss Em.! 'I has been young, and now I'm ole,' as de Psalmist says! Yes, I'm ober seventy years ole, honey, and werry near my hebbenly home, praised be His name. Ober seventy year ole, honey, and wouldn't be a day younger if I could! 'Cause why should I? I should be that much furder off from home. Lor', Miss Em.! Good young people like you pities poor ole people! But, honey, you should 'joice ober us rather, 'cause we's almos' home! But dat wa'n't what I was gwine to say, Miss Em.! I was gwine to say dat in ober sebenty years' experience ob life I nebber knowed a single case where a sakkerfise for duty wa'n't richly 'warded in dis world! not hab to wait for de nex' world, honey, which do offen seem a long 'way off to young people in deir young days; but in *dis* here world! And now, mind

what I tell you, Miss Em., your sakkerfise 'll be 'warded in dis world, and 'fore long, too. I feels it!"

"You are very kind and good to try to comfort me, dear Aunt Monica; but indeed I do not desire any reward, as I could not have done otherwise than I did," said Em., as she arose and bid the old creature good-night.

## CHAPTER XXX.

### REWARD.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast.

POPE.

Em., in her self-devotion, certainly did not think that she had done any more than her plain duty, or that she deserved any special credit for it; yet still, the words of the old negro woman cheered and comforted her like a prophecy of happiness.

And from that day forth she went singing about her work as if no vision of a better fortune had broken upon her only to be withdrawn to leave her lot more gloomy than before.

Susan Palmer and Ann Whitlock, however, could scarcely forgive either Em. or her father.

"You'll never have another chance to make a lady of yourself!" would Mrs. Palmer declare, day after day, with tiresome repetition.

"It was all John Palmer's fault! I shouldn't a bit wonder if some judgment didn't fall on that man for his

selfishness!" would be Ann Whitlock's invariable comment.

"My dear father is the most unselfish man in the whole world, bless him!" would be Em.'s constant rejoinder.

So their days went on in the usual routine, until one memorable night, near the last of May, when a calamity fell upon the house that almost seemed to fulfil Ann Whitlock's sinister predictions.

It was a beautifully clear, starlit night; and all the family sat out in the back porch, which was but a rude shed over the door and window, with a rough, flag stone floor, all of which had been added to the house by John himself.

Here the family sat on warm nights, because the rear of the house opening upon their well-kept yard was so much cleaner, sweeter and quieter than the front, which opened on the reeking, fetid, noisy lane. And here, therefore, on this night they sat and rested in the coolness and stillness, little thinking that this would be the last night they would spend in the dear, little old home.

They remained there later than usual, so that it was ten o'clock when at length they retired to rest.

As we observed before, they were all hard workers and heavy sleepers in that house, so that by half past ten every one was in the "land of Nod;" even Em., who was always the last to fall asleep.

She had slept soundly for several hours, and it was long after midnight and near daybreak, when she was rudely aroused by a loud banging and shouting at the front door, mingled with ear-piercing shrieks of:

"FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!"

All now seemed to pass in an instant.

She sprang out of bed and threw open her window-shutters, to see the whole lane illuminated by a red

glare, and a crowd of people gathered before her own house, and to hear the front door fall in with a crash under the blows of the men that were beating at it, and the voice of her father crying out:

"What in the name of heaven is the matter?"

"FIRE, man! Can't you see for yourself?" shouted a score of voices.

Indeed, John had seen for himself in the very instant that he had spoken, and he had sprung back into the house to the rescue of his family, even before his question had been answered.

"FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!" roared the crowd.

"Save life! You can't save anything else!" cried many voices, as the crowd poured into the burning building.

"FIRE! FIRE! FIRE!" bellowed the fast gathering multitude, making "confusion worse confounded," as the distant rattle of the approaching engines was heard.

Meanwhile Em., half suffocated with smoke and heat, tried to rouse the heavy sleeper who shared her bed, and who slept through all this noise and confusion all the more heavily now because of the gas that sealed up her senses.

All Em.'s shakings and shoutings proved ineffectual to awaken her, and there was not another minute's time to be lost, for the sparks were already falling down from a fissure in the blazing roof upon the wooden floor of the chamber.

So Em. seized a pitcher full of water from the washstand near, and threw its contents into the face of the sleeper, who immediately sprang up, startled, confused, terrified, strangling, sputtering, and exclaiming:

"WHO did that there? Ef I do get at yer, whoever yer are, *I'll* let yer know— Oh! oh! my Lord in

heaven, what has happened—is the house afire?" she suddenly cried out in the midst of her scolding, as smoke, heat and sparks revealed the calamity.

"Yes, the house is on fire! Escape for your life, while I save the children!" cried Em., flying into the next room where the two boys slept.

But there she was met by her father, who hurriedly exclaimed:

"Come! come quickly, my child!"

"Aunty! Aunty Whitlock!" cried Em., looking back into the burning room where through smoke and flame, she saw the old woman pushing her bedding through the open window.

"Aunty! Aunty Whitlock! You'll be burned to death, if you don't hurry!" cried Em., in the extremity of distress.

"I won't hurry until I have saved my property! A body might's well be dead as have nothink to live on!" screamed the old woman, who was pushing out her trunk after her bedding through the window, while sparks and brands fell thick from the burning roof overhead.

"Oh, Heaven! what's to be done!" cried Em., clasping her hands.

"She deserves to be left to her fate! for a foolhardy idiot! thinking more of her pelf than she does of herself! But 'sich is life!'" exclaimed John, as he rushed back into the burning room, caught a blanket from the floor, threw it over the head of the obstinate old woman, seized her in his strong arms and bore her struggling through the smoke and shower of sparks out from the room; and not too soon, for the very next moment a part of the blazing roof fell in, filling the chamber with flame.

Hurrying his little daughter down before him, John

bore the big body of Ann Whitlock out of the house and dropped it on the sidewalk, almost falling over it as he did so, for his strength was quite spent.

Not so Ann Whitlock's!

She started up in a towering passion, shaking her fist at her deliverer, and exclaiming:

"You've 'vented of me from saving all my property, you grand vilyun, you! There's a good straw mattress as ever was made gone to destruction along o' *your* doings! You laid wiolunt hands on me just as I was asaving of it, you black-hearted brute! I'll have you prosecuted for 'salting and buttering me, you owdacious scowndul!"

"I purty nearly broke my back in bearing her out'n the burning house, and I give myself a straining as I shall never get over, mayhap, and this is the thanks I get for it But 'sich is life,'" said John meekly.

At this moment the roof and walls of the house fell in, and a tremendous outburst of flames roared up into the night sky.

With an involuntary cry of horror, every one recoiled from the conflagration.

The fire engine, that just at this instant arrived and was placed in position, began to play upon the flames.

The perfect uselessness of the effort at this late stage of the affair, provoked a peal of laughter from the crowd.

But the engine put out the last of the fire, which would soon have gone out of itself for the want of fuel, and then it turned and rattled away from the lane, followed by all the crowd, and leaving the houseless family, in solitude and darkness, standing over the ruins of their home.

"Well, John, we ought to fall on our knees and thank the Lord that all our lives are saved!" said Susan Palmer,

with emotion, as she hugged her two youngest children closely to her side.

"My heart has thanked Him all along," reverently replied the man.

"And I forgive you, John Palmer! I forgive you from the bottom of my heart, for all your treatment of me this night," said Mrs. Whitlock, solemnly.

"To think," said Susan, "that not more than a half hour ago we were all sleeping quietly in our beds, thinking of no danger, while the house was burning over our heads, and we might all have perished in the flames, if some late passer-by hadn't seen the fire and give the alarm. I wonder who first discovered the fire, John."

"I don't know. We may find out when it's day, maybe."

"And, oh! I wonder how the fire ever *did* occur, and we so careful, too."

"I don't know that either, and I don't suppose anybody ever will know," said John, with a sigh.

"Oh! to think, that half an hour ago we were all sleeping snugly in our own beds in our own little home where we have lived so long, and now we are standing out here in the night air, without so much as a roof to cover us!" sighed Susan.

"'Sich is life,'" said John. "And thankful we should be as we live!"

"Chillun," said a voice that had not spoken until now, the speaker being still hidden in obscurity, "chillun, don't stand out here in the night air. Watching that smouldering heap won't rise the house again out'n the ashes. Come home long o' me, and stop till you can turn round and see what you're gwine to do. It's most day now. Come home long o' me and I'll get you a bit 'o breakfast."

"I thank you, Aunt Monica. Indeed, it is the best thing we can do for the present," said Susan Palmer, speaking for the whole party, as she drew the two youngest of her children after her, and walked on toward the red brick hut.

John raised the little adopted child, Vennie, in his arms, and followed.

Em. and the other children brought up the rear, and so the sad little procession walked on to Aunt Monica's house, which the old woman hastened to make hospitable and pleasant by opening all the doors and windows and lighting two tallow candles.

The houseless family were but half clothed. John and the two boys had nothing on but their shirts and trousers. Susan Palmer and Em. had each only underclothes and a large shawl. The little children were in their night-gowns. But it was a clear, warm, summer night, or, rather, morning, and so they could not suffer from scantiness of their raiment.

"Set down, chillun, and make yourself to home. 'Tain't a very spacious mansion; but it is big enough, and, if it wa'n't, I beliebe the Lord would make it big enough, same as He made de loabs and fishes last out to feed de whole multitude, and the widow's cruse of oil and bag o' meal hold out to nourish de prophet. Set down, chillun, and 'sider de house as your own, and me as your faithful ole sarvint a-getting breakfas' for you all," said Aunt Monica.

John and Susan thanked her; but Em. went up to her side, and took the old, withered hand, and pressed it to her lips, with as much respect, or more, than she would have kissed the hand of a queen, for to her fine apprehension there was a delicacy as well as depth of feeling in this poor, untutored colored woman that she had seldom found in the rich and cultivated; and let it

be remembered that the avocations of the laundress's daughter brought her often in communication with the "better classes."

The burned out family found seats—John and Susan in the two chip-bottomed chairs; Em. and the children on the side of the clean bed in the corner; the two boys on the two three-legged stools.

Old Monica busied herself with kindling the fire and getting breakfast, addressing cheering words to her guests from time to time; but now that the high excitement was all over, the unfortunate family found time to appreciate their situation, and sat almost entirely silent and motionless, as if half-stunned and paralyzed under the burden of their calamity.

This lasted until suddenly Em. said:

"Why, where is Aunty Whitlock?"

"Sure enough, where is the poor woman?" uneasily inquired John.

"Oh, you may depend she is down at the house, raking among the cinders to see if she can find anything worth saving!" said Susan.

"I think she is there, watching her personal effects, that she saved with so much risk to her life," suggested Em.

"That's it!" said John, suddenly rising from his seat. "Come, boys, let us go down and help the old woman to bring up her things. You'll find room enough for them in your back yard, won't you, aunty?"

"Better'n that, honey! I'll find room 'nough for 'em in my loff'," answered old Monica, pointing to a little ladder in the corner of her room, that led up through a trap-door into a confined space under the sloping roof.

As soon as John and the two boys had left the house, old Monica locked the door after them and dragged a

big chest from under the table out into the middle of the floor, and said :

"Here, chillun. Here's lots o' good clothes as I never had on my back, and never will ; which some of 'em was give to me by my ole missus, Mrs. Capting Wyndeworth, and likewise by Madame Malwiny Warde, and even my dear Miss Emolyn, gone to glory. Lor,' chillun, dey nebber would a fit me, nor likewise suited me in dé best o' days, and I'm sure dey wouldn't now. Here, Miss Em., here's a blue gingham dress, which was my precious Miss Emolyn's. I know it will fit you to a tee. And here, Miss Palmer ; here's a pink calico as I think'll fit you, dough it may be a bit too big in the waist ; but you can draw it in. Now, chillun, fix yourselves up agin the men-folks come back to deir breakfas'," concluded Monica, leaving her precious chest open, and making her guests free of its contents.

"I do not like to take so many favors from the old woman," whispered Susan.

"Oh, mother, do ! Don't you see how it delights her to help us ?" replied Em., who was a much finer discerner of spirits than the matron.

"Well, I s'pose we shall have to be obleeged to her, anyhow, because we can't go outside the door in our petticoats," sighed Susan, as she dressed herself in the fresh pink calico gown.

Em. followed her example.

And then old Monica, regretting that she had no clothes to fit the children or their father, closed her chest and put it away.

Next she provided fresh water and clean towels, that they might all bathe their faces and hands.

By the time they were made comfortable, John and the two boys arrived, bringing in tow Mrs. Ann Whitock and all her belongings, which latter were piled out-

side the hut until they could be conveniently brought in to be stowed away.

"There's more saved from the fire than we had any idea of, Susan, my dear," said John Palmer, as he entered the hut. "Seems like while I was getting of you all out of the front way, the crowd that followed me in the house hev lots of things out'n the back windows, and dragged 'em off to a safe distance behind."

"Oh, John, I am so thankful! *What* is saved?" inquired Susan.

"Oh, lots of things—bedding, and cooking utensils, and clothing. Them's the most important, I reckon!"

"Oh, yes, indeed."

"Well, and the neighbors are kind enough! What do you think I found 'em all doing down there?"

"Why, what, John?"

"Why, though it was hardly daylight when I got there, I found the neighbor-men, even them as we thought the worst on, Susan, all working as hard as they could a-getting together what was left of our truck, and conveying it to the best of them three vacant houses over the way. And there was a lot of neighbor-women with brooms, and pails, and floor-cloths, a-washing and cleaning up the house to make it comfortable for us! You see, now, Susan, people may have their faults, but they may have good hearts at the bottom all the time!"

"Bless them!" exclaimed Susan. "Oh, what a help!"

Em. said nothing, but her face shone as the face of an angel! It was such delight to her to hear good things of her neighbors.

"So I don't see," said John, "why we mightn't go right in. The house is not as good as the one we left, but it is the next best in the lane; and when I get you all fixed, I'll go and see the landlord and arrange with him for the rent. It looks like doing things hind part

foremost to move into a vacant house before renting it; but in case of fire, one hasn't much choice ; besides, Simson, next door, had the key, and the landlord knows me, and so I suppose it is all right."

" In course it is, Mr. Palmer, and glad enough he'll be of a good tenant like you. And now, chillun, come and eat your breakfas' before the corn-cakes get cole," said Aunt Monica.

The house-wrecked family gathered around her hospitable board, and ate as hearty a meal as if they had been seated at their own familiar table.

After breakfast they went into their new residence, accompanied by old Monica, who lent a willing and able hand towards helping to settle them.

In the course of the same day much help arrived from John's employer and Susan's customers, so that the condition of the family was much improved.

And before the end of June something happened which totally revolutionized their lives, and bade fair to realize, to the utmost, the old Christian woman's faithful previsions of prosperity and happiness.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### A SUMMER'S FLITTING.

Where rose the mountains, there to her were friends;
Where rolled the river, thereby was her home;
Where a blue sky and glowing clime extends,
She had the passion and the power to roam.
The cavern, forest, ravine, torrent's foam
Were unto her companionship; they spake
A mutual language, clearer than the tone
Of her land's tongue, which she would oft forsake
For Nature's pages glazed by sunbeams on the lake.

BYRON.

On the first of June the public works at the arsenal were suddenly stopped for want of funds to pay the workmen. Some hundred men were thrown out of employment for an indefinite time, for the works could not be resumed until an appropriation should be made, and that could not be done before Congress should meet in the ensuing winter.

John Palmer found himself out of his old workshop as well as out of his old house. All this was for the very best, so far as he was concerned. These seeming calamities prepared him for a fortunate change, which nothing short of them could have compelled him to make.

John was an oyster, as I have several times had occasion to remark; his house was his shell, and he would have grown old and died in it if he had not been roasted out. And so, also, he would have worked on at the arsenal as long as his strength should have held out, had not the shops been closed.

Now that all his habits were forcibly broken up by fate he was ready for any change, never presuming to hope one for the better.

But that change came unexpectedly, as all good or evil fortune does come.

It was one morning early in June, Susan Palmer was, as usual, in the back yard, "in the suds." Em. was in the kitchen washing up the dishes; the children were all at the public school, and John was "standing around," with the aimless, disconsolate air of an industrious man out of work, when his daughter spoke cheerfully to encourage him:

"Father, look on the bright side! think better of this being out of work for a few weeks—"

"It will be months, girl, it will be months!" interrupted John, with a heavy sigh.

"Well, then, months! Suppose it should be months. Why should you care? You have earned this rest, father, earned it well, and you need it, too! need it sorely! I have never known you to have a rest as far back as I can remember. And the only time I ever knew you to be out of work was the cholera summer, when you toiled harder than you ever did before, nursing the sick. Now, father, accept this forced rest as a boon," concluded Em., as she filled and lighted his pipe and handed it to him.

"Yes," answered John, "it is all very well for me to sit down and smoke at my ease; but what is to become of you, and your mother, and the children?"

Em. laughed :

"Why, you dear old darling, mother has always taken care of herself and half the household besides ; and as for me, I am now going to put my shoulder to the wheel, and take care of the other half!"

"What do you mean, girl?"

"Oh, I mean I am going out to service! Mrs. Willet has been wanting me ever so long to come to her as nurse and seamstress, and now I am going. I have such a good stock of clothes that I shall not need to buy any for a year, and every cent of my earnings shall go to help keep the family," said Em., brightly.

John Palmer stared at her for a moment in silence, then took the pipe out of his mouth and replied :

"Indeed you shall not do that, Em. No! I never was over-anxious for any o' my darters to go out to service in other people's houses ; but Mary Ann and Jane Eliza was so strong and hearty, besides being bent on going to yearn their own bread, that I consented. But as to you, Em., no! you're too delicate! Don't you let me hear nothing more about it!"

"But, father—"

"Don't 'but' me, Em.! I tell you I won't have it! I reckon I can break stones on the avenue, if I can't do anything else ; and I'll do that sooner'n I'll let you go out to service! So there, now!"

The conversation was interrupted by a knock at the front door.

Em. quickly pulled down her sleeves and threw off her work apron and went to open it.

The visitor was Mrs Willet.

"Oh, madame, you wish to see my mother? Please walk in. Take a seat," said the girl, placing a chair.

"Well, child, I *do* wish to see your mother, and also your father and yourself ; for you are all concerned in

the object of my visit," said the kind-hearted lady, as she, smiling, took the offered seat.

John Palmer, who had heard all that had passed, signed to Em. that he would notify his wife of the visit; and so, even before Em. could reply, the worthy couple entered the room and respectfully saluted the lady.

"I have heard that you are out of work, and likely to be so for a long time to come, Palmer; so I called this morning to make a proposition to you," began Mrs. Willet.

"Thank you, madame, for your kindness; but I think I know what it is. Em.'s going into service; but I can't consent to it, ma'am. I can't let her go, ma'am, and no offence, I hope," said John.

"None in the world. I think you are quite right. But it is not about your daughter especially that I wish to speak to-day. My proposal concerns your whole family. In brief, it is this: Dr. Willet is on the look-out for a suitable family to take charge of a manor-house in Alleghany county, Virginia."

John looked surprised, and was about to speak, when the lady laughingly interrupted him with:

"Now, don't say a word, Palmer, until you have heard all I have got to say. This manor-house was the seat of a very old family of Welsh descent. The last owner died during his sojourn in Europe. The heir wants a trustworthy family to live in a part of the old house and take care of the whole of it. The duty of the man would be to look after the work of the home grounds, under the agent. The duty of the woman would be to look after the women of the plantation in times of sickness—to see that they have proper food, medicine and attendance; also to air and warm the house at intervals, to keep it and its handsome furniture from injury by dampness or mould."

Here Susan's lips opened, but Mrs. Willet good-humoredly stopped her by saying:

"Now, just wait until I have done! I have told you first the duties that will be required of you, now I will tell you of the compensation for these duties. First, Palmer, you will receive an income of six hundred dollars a year, paid quarterly; next, house-room to accommodate all your family; next, the use of a horse and covered cart for yourself, the use of all the milk you want from the dairy, all the vegetables from the garden, all the fruit from the orchard, and all the flour and meal from the granaries, and the meat from the store-house, that you may require for your household consumption. Of course, there are some little minor duties, as well as some little minor advantages, too trifling to be considered here, but which you will find out, all in good time."

Here Em. was about to speak, but Mrs. Willet held up a finger to silence her, and continued:

"One of the greatest attractions of the place is its extreme salubrity. It is situated among the loftiest ridges of the Alleghany Mountains, and the air is so pure, that meat hung out in the sun will dry up instead of decomposing. It is certain that people there live to a great age."

Here all three, father, mother and daughter, opened their mouths to speak, but were once more stopped by Mrs. Willet, who held up her hand and said:

"Indeed you must hear me quite out, before replying; for now there is one great disadvantage about the situation of which I must, in common justice, warn you. It is its utter desolation and solitude. There are no neighbors within reach. The nearest house is ten miles off. The nearest town is a hundred, the nearest village is thirty. You would have to live alone with

yourselves, you would have no other society, you would have to send thirty miles to post a letter, or else never write one. You would have to send your children thirty miles to school, or else to keep them at home; and finally, you would have to send just as far for a doctor if you were sick, or else to do without one. There, now, I have placed the whole case before you. And now I am ready to hear what you have to say about it," concluded Mrs. Willet, folding her hands and reclining back in her chair.

"We thank you very much, ma'am, for your constant kindness to us," said John, with much feeling.

"Yes, which is much more than we deserve, considering how we slighted your last kind efforts for us, ma'am," added Susan.

"But we are indeed very grateful for all, Mrs. Willett," said Em., softly.

"Well, well, but what do you say to the present proposition?" inquired the lady.

"It's a great temptation to a poor man in my position, ma'am," said John, reflectively—"a very great temptation."

"'Temptation!'" echoed Susan—"'Temptation!' You speak as if Old Nick had offered it instead of a Christian lady! A PROVIDENCE, *I* call it, John!"

"Oh, father, let us accept it thankfully! let us go, dear father, it will be so delightful! Oh, it will be like going to heaven!" pleaded Em., with a sigh of deep aspiration, as she clasped her hands and raised her blue eyes to John's face.

"My child, your wish would rule me more than anything else, except your welfare. If the two can be made one, then you will have your way. We must take a little time to think it over, however. Madame,"

he said, turning to Mrs. Willet, "will you give us until to-morrow to make up our minds?"

"Why, certainly, Palmer, I could hardly expect you to give an answer so soon. Will you come to the doctor's office in the morning and let him know your decision?"

"Yes, madame; thank you."

"Ma'am, you needn't wait until to-morrow to let that agent gentleman know that we'll take the place and thank you. I've quite made up *my* mind and, what's more to the purpose, Em.'s made up *hers*. It's only a matter of form, waitin' for John. He'll be sure to accept," said Susan, eagerly, for she was evidently very anxious to secure the situation.

"Yes, my good woman, I hear what you say; but still I think we had best not write to the agent until we have heard your husband's final decision; for I remember you were equally confident about his consent that his daughter should take the place offered her by Mrs. Fanning. Yet you know he would not permit her to do so," said the lady, laughingly, as she took leave.

"Now, John Palmer, I do think as you are flying right in the face of Providence, holding off until to-morrow before you make sure of that place. Somebody else may apply and get it this very night! Oh, my very heart feels ready to burst when I think of it!" exclaimed Susan Palmer, anxiously, as soon as the lady had left the house.

"Oh, don't you be afraid! Mrs. Willet will be sure to keep it for us until to-morrow," said John, soothingly.

"But are you agwine to accept it to-morrow? that's what I'm a-dying to know!" cried Susan.

"Well, yes, I suppose so," thoughtfully replied John

"Well, then, why in the world couldn't you have told the lady so to-day?"

"Because it was so sudden, and I thought as we had better sleep on it first."

"Sleep on it? Sleep on th.rns, and thistles, and briers, and nettles, you mean! That's what *I* shall sleep on, thinking all night as something will happen along of your delays to knock us all out of our good fortune. Now, I'd like to ask you if there's *any* objection as the greatest grumbler in the world could find to such a splendid place, that you should need a minute to think whether you would like to take it or not!" said Susan, impatiently.

"Well, no, my dear, there certainly is not, except what the lady herself owned up to, its being so lonesome."

"What company do we want except ourselves and the colored people, which is always *gay* company, and the dumb creeturs in the farm-yard and stables, which is always *good* company?"

"Well, none, my dear, to be sure."

"Now, then, what else is to be thought of?"

"Why, its being so far from town in case anybody was sick, you know."

"Fiddle-de-dee! We never had a spell of sickness in all our lives, John. And, besides, they say that place is uncommon healthy; and can't we take a physic-box and a Family Guide with us?"

"Well, my dear, I think as you are right. I reckon as I will give the lady her answer that we'll take the place. Only it is always better to think over a move before making it," replied John.

The talk did not end there, however, but was continued all that day and half that night, and resumed early the next morning, and carried on until John dressed himself in his Sunday clothes and went off to give Mrs. Willet her answer.

The contract was made and signed the same morning

Dr. Willet obtained a quarter's wages in advance for John, to enable him to pay the expenses of his removal. The family were to travel by wagon, as old-time emigrants were wont to move. And he meant to take his few old household goods that had been saved from the fire. It is true, as Susan urged, they were not worth moving, but then they had belonged to his mother, and John could not sell or give them away.

They sold, however, all the new furniture that had been given them to replace that which was lost by fire. And with the little sum they realized from the sale, added to that which was advanced by the agent, John bought a large, substantial, covered wagon and a span of strong draught horses with which to make their journey into Virginia.

"You see, Susan," he explained, "it would cost us just as much to go by stage-coach, because there's so many on us, let alone that we should have to travel the last thirty miles by wagon, any way. So by this plan we go more comfortable and private and independent, and without loss, because at the end of the journey we have our wagon and horses left."

Susan agreed with him that it was altogether the best plan.

As soon as the wagon arrived it was packed so judiciously that there was a plenty of room for what John called his live stock—that is to say, John, Susan, Em., Tom, Ned, Molly and Nelly; these were the family proper; besides these were their dependents—the little Italian, Vennie, Ann Whitlock, and old Monica; both of the two last-mentioned having sold off all their household goods and chattels to cast in their lot with the Palmers.

"We shall find some way to yearn our livin', once we are there," said Ann Whitlock.

"Yes, honey," replied old Monica, "for healthy as de place is, I reckon dere's young chillun born dere as well as oder places, and has to be took care of; so dere's work to begin wid, as you and I is both good for."

John was for a moment aghast at these two heavy additions to his burdens; but, looking on the best side with his habitual benevolence, he decided that this was an event to be rejoiced over, since it would afford them more company on the long journey, and make their retreat in the wilderness less lonesome.

It was just at sunrise, a clear bright Monday morning, early in June, that they all entered the wagon, John driving, and started on their way to Virginia.

A shower of good wishes and old shoes were sent after them by their neighbors in the lane. They replied with smiles and thanks; but did not look back; to do so, they thought, would not be lucky.

They crossed the river by the long bridge, and began to ascend the road leading through the woods on the other side.

There Em. proposed that all should get out and walk, for it was yet early in the morning, the air was cool, and the woods were shady and delicious.

John acknowledged that the load *was* rather a heavy one for two beasts, so he helped his "live stock" to alight, and they walked on, John leading the horses.

"Well, Em., now you are across the river and in the country, and going further into it, what do you think of it?" inquired Palmer.

"Oh, I feel as if I were in Paradise, and on my way to heaven," replied the grateful girl, every sense on the *qui vive* to enjoy the dewy greenness of the woods, the perfume of the sweet brier and wild honeysuckle and countless ground flowers, and the melody of innumer-

able birds that at this early hour filled the forest with their songs.

The whole party walked on, while John led the horses. It was so much pleasanter to walk than to ride through those delightful woods.

They traveled leisurely on account of the heavy load and the long journey. So by noon they had made but fifteen miles' progress, when they came to a good halting-place in a small, shady opening of the forest.

Here they stopped to rest for an hour, during which John unloosed the horses and set them free to nibble the grass from the glade, and drink water from the branch that flowed through it.

The boys collected sticks and made a fire on the ground; Em. took the tea-kettle from the wagon and filled it from the spring, and hung it over the blaze from an impromptu crane arranged by the boys; Susan Palmer fried eggs and rashers of bacon; the little girls "set the table" by spreading a white cloth and arranging crockery and cutlery on the grass, while Ann Whitlock and Aunt Monica, being old, were allowed to sit down and rest until dinner was ready.

At one o'clock, rested and refreshed, and having everything that they had used washed and repacked, they resumed their journey.

Susan Palmer, Ann Whitlock, and old Monica took seats in the wagon; John walked and led the horses, followed by Em. and the children on foot.

"*Now* what do you think of it, my girl?" inquired John.

"Oh, it is lovely! I would like the journey to last forever!" exclaimed Em. in delight.

"This is only the first day," said John.

"How many days will it be, father?"

"At this rate of travel a week—no, six days! I ex-

pect, with good luck, to be at the Wilderness by Saturday night."

"Then we shall have six happy days!"

"Em., when you are tired you must get into the wagon."

"Tired! Oh, I am not tired! I should never get tired sauntering along through these lovely, lovely woods!"

"All right, so much the better for the beasts," said John, as he too, "sauntered" on beside his walking horses.

The three elder women inside, overcome by fatigue, dinner, and the motion of the wagon, were all sound asleep.

John and Em. were never wider awake as they walked and talked.

The children ran hither and thither, gathering wild flowers, chasing butterflies, startling squirrels laughing, shouting, calling to each other, and making a glad holiday of the summer day's journey through the woods.

"Oh, if it could only last forever!" said Em., clasping her hands in fervent aspiration.

"It will last six days, my dear, and then maybe we may find the end even pleasanter than the journey—like a Christian's pilgrimage through this world, my dear. 'Sich is life,'" said John, gently touching up his horses lest they should stand quite still and go to sleep.

From noon to sunset they made ten miles, and then halted for the night in a beautiful little wooded valley between two steep hills.

Here John unharnessed his horses and fed and watered them, while Susan and Em. prepared supper.

After the evening meal, John and the boys set up tents, constructed of branches cut from the nearest

trees, and covered with blankets. Under these Susan and Em. made the beds.

By nine o'clock the four elder persons of the party were fast asleep; but Em. and the three little girls who went to bed in the wagon, and the two boys who lay down in the smallest tent, were all too pleased with the novelty of camping out all night in the woods to be able to close their eyes until midnight, when at last, from sheer fatigue, they fell asleep.

They were all delightfully awakened in the morning by the caroling of a thousand thousand birds. They tumbled out of their funny beds, all full of glee, as birds out of their nests.

Their father was already up and looking after his horses, and the three elder women were dressing themselves within the screen of their tent.

The boys made haste and gathered sticks and kindled a fire, and filled the kettle at the spring, and hung it over the blaze.

Then everybody—first the women and children, and next the man and boys—went down to the branch and washed themselves.

After breakfast, much rested and refreshed, they resumed their journey, the whole party now walking.

I have given this first day's journey as a sample of all that followed, except the last—Saturday—which was the most difficult and dangerous, as on that day they had to wind through a tortuous mountain-pass to reach their destination—the old manor of the Elphines.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### "THE WILDERNESS."

Into a valley deep their roadway led,
Where stood a mansion in a darksome glade,
With mountains round about environed,
And mighty woods that did the valleys shade,
While, like deserted dwelling, lone it stood,
And far below a mighty river flowed.

SPENSER.

They had been traveling all that long, long summer's day, over an old, grass-grown, abandoned turn-pike road that led through a dark, dense forest, beyond which arose, though they could not see it, the frowning ridge of mountains known as the Horse-Shoe.

With every mile of the journey this road grew more difficult. The track became narrower, deeper, steeper and more winding; the thickly wooded banks on either side, higher, darker, and more rocky, until at length, towards the close of day, they found themselves in the fearful mountain pass that led to the hidden dale called, for its isolation, "The Wilderness."

Terrible as was the prospect before them, they were forced to go on, as there was no possible retreat; because to have attempted to turn, or to back the wagon, would have been certain destruction. So crooked and abrupt were the turnings of this road, that

it was impossible to see more than a few yards before or behind them ; so irregular was it, also, that sometimes the sheer descent of many hundred feet would be on the right of their narrow track, and the ascent on their left ; and then, after a few tortuous turnings, all this would be reversed, and ascent would be on the right, and the descent on the left.

This superlatively perilous position demanded the most watchful vigilance and the most anxious care.

At length it was deemed absolutely necessary that the whole party, young and old, should alight from the wagon and travel on foot.

John, as before, walked at the horses' heads, between them and the brink of the descending precipice, leading them carefully and praying devoutly.

His fellow-travelers followed him in a cautious procession behind the wagon.

Susan Palmer led little Molly, keeping herself between the child and the precipice, and compelling her two lads to walk hand in hand, directly before her, that she might have her eye on them and see that they did not cut up in such a perilous place.

Mrs. Whitlock led little Nelly, keeping her on the safe side.

Finally, Em, and old Monica took the Italian child, Vennie, between them.

So they toiled on through that dark mountain pass in the declining day ; but not silently, by any means. Sometimes, when the turning was more abrupt, the descent steeper, and the brink of the precipice nearer than usual, John would burst out in exclamatory prayer of :

" Lord, have mercy and spare our lives, and I'll try to be a better man !" or words to that effect.

Then Susan would observe :

"Let this be a most solemn warning to *you*, John Palmer, never to leave a sartainty for an onsartainty; never to be beguiled into a road you don't know the end of; never to buy 'a pig in a poke.' You're a-prayin' for our lives to be spared, and promising to be a better man—now I do hope if we *are* spared, which I don't expect, that you will be a more prudent man than to lead your family into such danger—which I don't look for no more than the other," or something to the same purpose.

To all of her unjust rebukes poor John would reply, in a moralizing mood:

"It was her, her own self, as worried me into it, whether or no, and now she blames me; but 'sich is life!'"

There was not one of the party but who bitterly complained of this portion of their journey, except Em., and she really and intensely enjoyed it. The savage aspect of the mountain-pass had for her a strange charm, a wondrous spell, that she could neither understand nor resist.

The last half mile of the pass, though not less steep, rugged, and difficult, was certainly less perilous than it had been before. For here, instead of running along the very brink of frightful precipices, their road entered a sort of cleft in the rocks, between two ridges, so high that they hid all view to the right and left, and so crooked that the travelers could not see twenty yards before or behind them; so steep that, at every downward step, the back of the wagon seemed in danger of pitching over the heads of the horses.

At length, a few yards before them, instead of a frowning precipice, they saw an opening in the rocks, like a broken arch.

A few turns of the wagon wheels and a few steps of

eager walking, brought team and foot-passengers to this natural gateway, where, following the road and turning abruptly to the right, they were met by a vision of beauty and sublimity that might well have repaid them for all their toils.

They were all, for a moment, spellbound. As for Em., her first exclamation of amazement and rapture died on her lips as she gasped for breath.

Behind them towered the lofty mountains through which they had just passed; and which, bending around them, right and left, embraced a lovely wooded vale that gently sloped down to the banks of a broad river.

Beyond the river, arose other wooded heights, behind which the setting sun threw up long lines of light that struck like gilded arrows through the fir-trees that crowned their heads, and tipped with fire every green leaf of the wooded vale until for one moment the scene seemed to be kindling into a conflagration. Then the golden arrows were withdrawn as into a sheath; the sun set, leaving the western horizon a gorgeous oriflamme of golden, purple, crimson, amber and roseate clouds, all of which were reflected in the mirror of the waters below.

Such was the vision of beauty that opened before the weary travelers.

John Palmer was the first to break the spell of silence that held the party.

"Well! thank the Lord, here we are at last, safe and sound and up to time," he said, taking off his hat and wiping his wet forehead, while his tired and thirsty horses, standing still, nibbled the fresh herbage in their reach. "Here's the Horseshoe Mountains, and there's the Wilderness, and there the river! But where's the manor-house? I see no sign of house, nor barn, nor

human habitation here," concluded John, looking all over the darkening landscape in despair.

"No more do I! But I feel just as if I was a-dreaming of the very worst dream I ever dreamed in my life, after eating cold pork-pie for supper," sighed Susan.

"Tell you what! It's a getting dark. Don't let's go any furder. Jes' let's camp out here till morning. My poor old knees are all broke, along of trying to hold up my body from tumbling over my toes, a clim'ing down them there rocks—devil's stair steps I call 'em!" said Mrs. Whitlock.

Dismayed, John seemed half inclined to take this advice for want of better counsel, until Em. came to his aid.

"Father, dear," she said, "don't you see right under us is a road leading into the woods? It is grass-grown, and it looks disused and neglected; but still it *is* a road, and must go to some place, probably to the house."

"That's so," said John, with a look of relief. "I don't see no house, nor no sign of a house; but here's a road, and we'll enter it and walk by faith, 'for sich is life.'"

"Indeed, then, we'll not walk another foot by nothing whatsomedever. If we must go farther, John Palmer, the road looks toler'ble safe, and we'll get in the wagon and ride," said Susan.

"Yes, for we're all just dead beat," added Mrs. Whitlock.

"Get in, then, all on you. I'm sorry for the poor, over-driven beasts; but there, it can't be helped. 'Sich is life!'"

The whole party entered the wagon except Em. and the boys, who declared that they preferred to walk, and John, who, as usual, led the horses.

It was now almost dark, but from where they started

they could still see the river, with the wooded heights beyond, and the western horizon with its fading glories.

The road lay directly westward through the woods, down the gentle slope into thicker woods, that soon shut from view all but the starlit sky above and the faint line of the road below.

Then they came suddenly to a stone wall on their right, within which were woods as thick as those without, on their left.

"This must be the wall of the park," called out John to his companions.

"Well, then, I hope it is, and that we may not be way-laid and murdered before we reach the end of our journey!" said Susan, encouragingly.

"If that's the wall, Palmer, keep a sharp look-out for the gate, or else you'll miss it in the darkness, and then there!" added Ann Whitlock.

John laughed, and led his horses a good way yet, until he came to an angle, where the road turned abruptly, following the wall.

"I reckon we shall find the gate on this side. I reckon the house fronts the river, you see, and has its back to the mountain," called John to his companions, as he cheered his tired horses, which, with the intuition that they were drawing near their rest, quickened their paces and soon brought the travelers to a huge iron gate, where they instinctively came to a halt.

The strong iron gate looked more like the entrance to a State prison than to a gentleman's mansion.

On each side of this great gate stood a stone cottage, built into the wall.

From the one on the right, which was probably the porter's lodge, a dim light gleamed from the chinks of the little window shutters, while the one on the left was closed up and quite dark.

John left his horses standing and went to open the gate; but finding it fast, he struck ringing blows upon it with the loaded end of his riding whip.

A voice from the darkness behind the little glimmering light called out—in tones, half terrified and half defiant:

"WHO DAR?"

"It's me! the new overseer and his folks, if this is the place called the Wilderness—is it?" asked John, coming straight to the point.

"Yes, sar; dis is de Will'ness! 'Sias, ole man, wake up and go open de gate for de new oberseer. Wake up, I tell yer! Don't be forebberlastin' a-snoozin' ober yer ole stump o' pipe! Yer'll die dat way some ob dese days, now mind, I tell yer good! Yer hear me, don't yer? Wake up, I say!"

A muffled, grumbling and growling voice replied to this objurgation, but its words were inaudible, and presently the lodge door opened and a little old negro man, bent nearly double with age, and carrying a flaring tallow candle in his hand, came out of the lodge, crept up to the gate, and keeping on the safe side, held up his flickering light to the face of the stranger, and questioned him, as follows:

"Is you de new oberseer wot ole Marse Comical tole us about?"

"Yes, I am John Palmer, as the agent, Mr. Carmichael has sent here," answered John.

"Dat all right, den," said the little old dwarf, as he unlocked and unbarred the great iron gate, and, assisted by John, set it wide open.

"Where is the house?" inquired John, who, having led his team through these formidable portals, saw nothing within them but what seemed a continuation of the same grass-grown road through the same thick woods.

"Dribe right straight along dat abenue as you is on, and it will lead yer right up to de main door ob de manor-house. Here, take dis," replied the old man, handing to the new warder a large and heavy key, that might have answered for the main lock of the Black Tower.

"I hope the house has been opened and aired," said John.

The old man evaded the question by saying:

"Folly dat abenue, marster, and it will take yer straight as a fish hook to de manor-house."

"Has the musty old place been opened and aired for us? *That's* what we want to know! Has it?" peremptorily demanded Susan, who was not to be put off.

"Well, no, mist'ess, it ain't been tetched," meekly answered the old man.

"Why not, pray?" sharply inquired Susan.

"Which, ma'am, we didn't 'ceive no orders to dat 'fect from Marse Comical, nor likewise, if we had, we couldn't no more get nobody to go into dat house for lub *nor* money nor nothing at all! No money yer could lay down wouldn't bribe nobody to go inside ob dat house—no, not eben in broad daylight!"

"What do you mean by that?" fiercely demanded the new overseer's wife. "*We* are going there! Now, I want to know, have we been deceived and tricked by your Mr. Comical into going where nobody would go?"

The old man solemnly shook his head; but before he could utter another word a shrill voice from within the lodge called out:

"'SIAS! Ef yer's done opened dat gate, come along in here dis minute, and stop lettin' yer ole fool tongue run! Dat tongue ob yern'll cut yer head off, some ob dese days! Now, min' I tell yer good! Yer hears me, don't yer?"

The old man, with a startled air, would have sprung to obey this order, but Susan suddenly put out her strong arm and caught and held him, peremptorily demanding:

"Why can't you get anybody to go into that old house for love or money, either by night or day? Tell me that, I say!"

"Nuffin, den!" sulkily answered the old man. "Leas' said, soonest mended."

"There is something in all this, and I will know what it is!" persisted Susan, holding on to her victim.

The old man opened his mouth, but before he could speak came the angry voice from the lodge, shriller than ever, screaming:

"YOU 'SIAS! Will yer shet up yer ole mouf and come in, or mus' I come out dar and fetch yer by de har ob yer head?"

"I'm comin', Sereny, honey; I'm comin' now!" exclaimed the porter, as he suddenly twitched himself out of Susan's hold, and hurried as fast as age would permit him to his lodge.

Susan climbed out of the wagon as quickly as she could and pursued him, crying out:

"Not until you have answered my—"

But Sias had gained the sanctuary of his cabin and clapped too the door, leaving Susan and her companions in the double darkness of ignorance and night.

"Well, I declare to man, if I ever saw anything like that in all my life before!" exclaimed the baffled and indignant woman.

"Come, Susan, get into the wagon and let us drive on to the house. It is now on to ten o'clock, and the little ones are in need of supper and bed," said John.

"Where are Em. and the boys? Let them get in the wagon this minute! Not be straggling behind in the dark, to be whisked up and whirled away before we

know it, in this horrid place!" exclaimed Susan, as she climbed into her seat.

"Here we all are, mother," said the voice of Em.

"I'm glad of it. Now, John Palmer, do you get up on your box. It's safer there than in the road."

"I can't, Susan, my dear. It is as dark as pitch, and I can't see my way; besides, the woods are so thick here that the branches of the trees meet across the road, and I have to push them out of the way."

"John Palmer, you are caught like a foolish old rat in a trap! You've come in here, through that mountain-pass, that you'll never be able to get out of, no more than an old rat can get out of a trap, the same way he got in! You're caught now, for a fool, John! Oh, if you had only listened to me!"

"I did listen to her," said John to himself; "I did listen to her, and follow her advice, and now she blames me! But 'sich is life.'"

"You might have known," continued Susan, "that there was *something* wrong, else why should the owner have left the place and gone off? Or else why couldn't the agent a-got some poor family in the neighborhood to come in and take care of the fine mansion for the fine wages and other fine things? Sich situations don't go a-begging, I tell you. Why did this go a-begging, then? *I* know why. 'Cause, as the old nigger said, they couldn't get *nobody*, black nor white, to go inside of that old, deserted place for love nor money. There! So they had to send hundreds of miles after a poor, innercent, unsuspicioning fellow like you, who didn't know nothing."

A sudden turn and a stop brought Mrs. Palmer's oration to an abrupt end.

"Well, my dear," said patient John, "we shall soon know all about it, for here we are at the old house, thank Heaven."

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### "AN OLD DESERTED MANSION."

Is this the hall? The nettle buildeth bowers
Where loathsome toad and beetle black are seen.
Are these the gardens? Fed by darkest showers,
The slimy worm hath o'er them crawling been.
Is this the home? The owlet's dreary cry
Unto that asking makes a dread reply.

NICOLL.

Before them, through the darkness, loomed a huge, black, shapeless mass of buildings that seemed only a condensation of the heaviest shadows among the shades of night.

Around it reared tall trees, whose tops were dimly seen against the starlit sky.

Behind it towered the highest ridge of the Horse-Shoe Mountain.

John Palmer had guessed right when he said that the manor-house, to be so completely hidden, must stand amid high trees, with its back to the base of the mountain, and its front to the wooded vale and the river.

It was, in fact, so completely concealed by the gigantic trees that overtopped it as to be invisible to the traveler until he was at its threshold.

"Strike a light and look about you, John, do, so we may know what that is before us. To me it looks like a jail, or worse!" said Susan, as she handed a box of

matches and other requisites for illumination to her husband.

The tired horses stood perfectly still while John lighted an end of candle and placed it in a lantern.

The feeble ray revealed but little in that desert of darkness—only a vast, dark, gray stone building, with heavy, projecting wings right and left, and a pile of huge stone steps, half covered with mould and moss, leading up to a great, iron-bound, oaken door, worn and weather-stained.

"Unlock it, John, while I wake up the children. They're all fast asleep in the wagon," ordered the man's commanding officer.

"You had better let the children stay where they are for the present, Susan, until I go in and open some room, and kindle a fire to air it. The wagon out o' doors, in the fresh air, is no end wholesomer for 'em than a damp, musty, shut up house."

"Very well; be quick about it, John, for I'm dead beat with hunger and fatigue," grumbled the half worn-out woman.

"Are the boys asleep, too?" inquired John.

"No, father!" answered two eager voices for themselves, as Tom and Ned tumbled out of the wagon, too excited by the novelty of the situation to think of sleeping, and too anxious to be employed to keep quiet any longer.

"All right, lads! Now light a candle, each of you, and look all around and see if you can find any brush or anything else to help to kindle a fire with, and bring it into the house to me. There's the door. I'll leave it open for you."

"Yes, sir! Yes, sir!"

And the eager boys lighted their candles and ran upon their errands.

John put the heavy key into the lock, and all his strength upon it before he could turn it, and open the door, which shrieked aloud as it grated upon its rusty hinges.

He entered and found himself in a vast hall running through the house, from front to back, with corresponding doors at each end, and a grand staircase rising from the centre.

There were also two doors on each side, and midway between these doors, were two wide fireplaces opposite each other.

John went up and down this hall, narrowly inspecting it.

It was furnished with oaken chairs and settees, with mats laid before them on the stone floor. It was tolerably free from dust and must, for a place so long shut up. And the air was not so close as might have been expected, owing probably to the ventilation afforded by the open fireplaces.

"Well," said John to himself, as he looked around, "I don't see that we can do better than to camp right down here in this hall for to-night. Everything 'pears to be convenient to cook our supper and make our beds."

With these words he went to the back door and opened it wide, that a free current of air might pass through the hall.

Then he looked out into the darkness.

He saw nothing but trees lifting their giant heights to the starry skies, and beyond them the rugged mountain wall.

"Nothing new! Nothing but trees and rocks, before and behind; but 'sich is life,'" said John, as he turned to meet his two boys, who came in with much noise, dragging dry brush and carrying their hats full

of pine cones. "That will do, lads! That will do famously. And now we have got two fireplaces to choose from—one on one side and one on t'other. Now, being the father of a fine family, I'll stand at the front door, and, looking inward, choose the one on the *right*," said John, with an attempt at a joke, for John was always merry with his boys.

A pair of huge andirons, in the shape of lions, stood in the fireplace where the boys piled the combustible pine cones, and the father applied the lighted match. Soon a blaze roared up the chimney that lighted the old hall from end to end and floor to ceiling.

Then they saw how beautiful this hall was, with its floor laid in alternate octagon blocks of white and dark marble, and its walls paneled with maple. And, in addition to the oaken chairs and settees along the sides that had at first attracted the attention of John, he now discovered stands, tables, racks and brackets, and every other needed convenience.

He piled a plenty of brush on the fire, and then went to the front door and called out:

"Come, Susan, you may wake up the little ones now and bring 'em in! Stay! I'll come out and help you!"

"Many hands make labor light;" and so the children were soon aroused and taken into the house, where the novelty of all they saw kept them sufficiently wide awake.

John and the boys quickly unloaded the wagon and conveyed all their household goods into the hall, where Susan and Em. began to get supper at the fireplace on the right, while Mrs. Whitlock went and filled the kettle from a pump she found in the back yard, and Monica made beds at the four corners, as the nearest approach to privacy that they could then command.

"You and the two boys can sleep in one corner," said Susan; "I and the three little girls in another; Mrs. Whitlock and Em. in the third; and old Aunt Monica in the last."

Meanwhile John and his lads had gone out to unharness the horses.

"We won't try to find the stables to-night, boys, but just take the beasts out o' the wagon and tether them here until morning. I didn't like to say anything before the women, but I am just dead beat myself, and ready to drop down the minute I have had a bit of supper," said John, with a weary sigh.

"Go in and rest yourself, father, do; and me and Ned will feed and water the horses," said Tom.

"Yes, do jes' trust us to do it this once, father. We've helped you often enough to know how," added Ned.

"All right, boys! You're better able to do it now than I am, I do b'lieve. You're a-coming up hill and I'm a-coming down; but 'sich is life,'" answered John, as he left the lads and entered the hall and threw himself down on the nearest bed—the one in the corner next the front door.

"Well, you're good at guessing, anyhow, John. That's the very place we 'pointed for you and the boys to sleep, because you would be on guard there like," said Susan, approvingly; but John was in "the land of Nod" before her speech was finished.

So Susan applied herself to the frying of ham and eggs, while Em. drew out one of the handsomely carved oak tables, laid a cloth, and arranged for supper.

By the time all was ready, the boys came in from their work, noisy and hungry.

John was roused from his sleep and all gathered around the table, where fragrant tea, cream bought

from a farmer that morning, fresh eggs and ham, and good bread and butter satisfied their appetites and repaid them for their toils.

After supper busy hands washed up the dishes and cleared the table, and then John led family prayers and all went to bed, and all but one to sleep.

It is said that people cannot sleep well the first night in a strange place.

That depends on circumstances.

The people who arrived that midsummer night at the old manor-house of the Wilderness, were so completely prostrated by fatigue that, with one exception, they slept so profoundly they might be said to have "died entirely dead" for the next ten hours.

The exception was Em.

Em. had improved the sleeping plan of the family, by making a little separate pallet for herself remote from all the others, and near the foot of the grand staircase.

Here, long after her companions were all "dead and gone" into the deepest sleep, Em. lay, in spite of her bodily fatigue, preternaturally wide awake; kept so by her strange surroundings, impressible imagination and excitable temperament, and as much alone in that vast, old hall as if the distant sound sleepers were not in existence.

The great hall was now quite dark, for the quick fire by which they had cooked their supper had gone out.

Em. lay in that deep darkness with her eyes wide open, and peering above the head of the grand staircase, where a large, dim window admitted from the night sky so faint a light that it seemed only a finer dark.

Em. lay there meditating, speculating, dreaming, peering, hour after hour, for—she knew not how long—

when, at length, she began to see that the faint light in the lofty windows was growing fuller.

She watched the brightening beam, and thought the day was dawning, until, slowly and softly, a ray of silvery light crept up on the wide window-sill, and spread abroad until the whole gallery above the staircase, and even a section of the lower hall, was one flood of radiance.

"I might have known it was the moon. It is not yet near morning, only the night does seem so long when one lies wide awake; it is not more than two o'clock, for that is the hour at which the moon rises to-night, I know," said the watcher to herself; for since they had been traveling in this primitive style, and camping out every night, John Palmer's family had become pretty well posted in the almanac of the year, particularly as to the hours of the rising and the setting of the sun and moon.

Wider awake than ever, Em. lay with open eyes watching the beautiful effect of the moonlight, which, filtering through the foliage of the trees beyond the window, threw their graceful shadows on the stairs, and on the floor of the lower hall.

She clasped her hands above her head and lay luxuriating in this still, bright beauty, when—

*Heaven and earth! What was that?*

The gazer's blood curdled. She tried to call out, but her tongue clove to the roof of her mouth.

The light was intercepted for a moment by a form that crossed before the window and began to descend the staircase.

It was the beautiful form of a woman, draped from the veiled head to the hidden feet in pure and snowy white, that beamed like "bridal satin" and silver gauze in the bright moonshine.

Slowly and softly the apparition descended the stairs, and approached the pallet on which Em. lay.

In a panic of horror that deprived her of all power of motion or utterance, she lay with closed eyes and suspended breath.

She felt the radiant form standing over her; she heard its breathing; then she heard some words, low, sweet, tender, as the softest sigh of the Ælian harp—but ineffably mournful, too.

"'One in the morning woke
To a world of joy and pain,
But the other was happier far—
She never woke again.'

"Sleep on, young maiden! Would I had the power to bid you sleep forever."

At that point Em.'s heart turned to ice, and she nearly lost consciousness.

Then she felt the apparition glide away—she felt that it was gone!

Slowly, slowly the girl came out of what had been almost a swoon of terror.

What was it that she had seen? Whence had it come? Whither gone?

She did not dare to think. She then remembered the vague words of the old gate-keeper concerning this ghostly and all deserted house, and, shuddering, put to herself the question that many besides the haunted Macbeth has asked:

"'*Can such things be?*'"

There was no possibility of sleep for the startled spirit of the young girl. She lay through the long and tedious hours that preceded the dawn, convinced in her own mind that she had beheld a supernatural being; wondering at the unnecessary panic into which the

harmless visitation had thrown her ; speculating as to the reason why people should be afraid of ghosts, since it was never known that a ghost had ever hurt a living creature ; asking herself, too, whether it were possible for her so to overcome the weakness of the flesh as to nerve herself to look upon and speak to this beautiful, flute-voiced spirit, should it ever re-appear to her.

But to this question Em.'s sensitive flesh uttered a decided negative in such thrills and shudders and creepings upon its own bones, that she gave up the point.

In the midst of all her mental disturbance, the girl had the self-control to make one resolution on the subject of her vision—never to mention it to any human being. She knew well that if she should tell what she had seen, her story would disturb and perhaps disorganize the family, and send them hurrying away from the haunted house, to seek uncertain livelihood elsewhere.

No! Em. would never tell. She would keep the ghost's secret, if only the ghost would have discretion to keep its own.

So resolving Em. watched for the dawn of day.

Meanwhile her companions, "dead and buried" in the profoundest depths of sleep, gave no signs of an early resurrection.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### EM.'S WONDERFUL ADVENTURE.

In the island's glades and vistas
Lovely are the light and gloom;
Fountains sparkle in the gardens,
And exotics breathe perfume. MACKAY.

The sleeping family were roused, about five o'clock in the morning, by the bright beams of the newly-risen sun streaming down through the window at the head of the grand staircase, and flooding the whole front of the hall with dazzling light: also by the caroling of birds, the crowing of cocks, the cackling of hens, the lowing of cows, the bleating of sheep, the barking of dogs, and, finally, by the shouting of some one who was loudly knocking at the front door.

John started up, drew on his trousers, and opened it to see old 'Sias standing there, with a large bunch of keys in his hand.

"Which dey 'longs to the locks inside ob de house; but was furgot to be guv to yer las' night, sir, and hopes yer wasn't ill-conwenienced by de same," the old man explained, presenting the keys.

"Not at all, no," said John Palmer, kindly.

But the old man lingered, keeping John at the open door, and presently saying:

"Did yer *hear* anything last night, marster?"

"No," said Palmer, staring.

"Nor likewise *see* anything?"

"No."

"That was wery strange."

"Why? What should I hear or see?"

"Least said soonest mended, marster," muttered the old man, and with that he turned abruptly and dived into the woods and disappeared.

"John!" called the voice of Susan from a distant and shadowy corner. "Pull that old negro in here by the hair of his head and make him tell what he means!"

"My dear, I don't believe he knows what he means. And, besides, he's gone! And, moreover, he hasn't much hair left to be pulled! I reckon as his wife has used it all up—for 'sich is life,'" muttered John to himself.

Em., lying on her pallet, waiting for an opportunity to rise and dress, had heard all that was said, but true to her resolution of silence on the subject of her vision, she did not speak.

By this time the boys had hastily drawn on their clothes.

"Come, lads, we'll go out and look after the horses, and give the women and girls a chance to get up and dress," said their father.

And they left the house together.

"This hall is as big as the inside of a church," said Susan, as she arose from her lowly bed and looked about her.

Her companions were already up, and dressed.

Old Monica began to kindle the fire, and when it was burning she went and lifted the bedding, one load at a time, and carried it out among the trees, for the double purpose of clearing the hall and airing the clothes.

Em. drew water and filled the kettle.

Ann Whitlock took the children out to the pump to wash their faces, and found that John and the boys had already been there.

Em. and her mother had the privilege of a hand-basin and a crash towel in the house.

Monica succeeded the children at the pump.

"Well," said Susan Palmer, "I hope this is the last morning as we shall have to live in this outlandish sort of way! I hope this day we'll all get settled in decent rooms!"

"No, my dear," said John, who had just come in, followed by his boys, as usual very hungry and obstreperous. "No, my dear Susan! This is the Sabbath—the day of rest—and we all need rest badly—the day of the Lord, and we'll keep it holy. No unnecessary work to-day, but after breakfast we will have the morning service."

"If I didn't forget it was Sunday!" said Susan; "but this here living of a wild life for a whole week is just enough to put everything out of one's head that they ever knew before!"

They breakfasted well on broiled mackerel, corn-cakes, and good coffee.

When the dishes were washed and the table cleared away, John brought out his big Bible and conducted the morning service.

After that was over, the front door was opened and the young people allowed to disperse through the woods and enjoy the delightful summer's day out-doors.

"Well, Em.! is *this* country enough for you?" inquired Palmer, coming to the side of his favorite child as she stood on the highest step leading down from the front door and looked out on the scene before her.

"Oh, yes, father, yes! This seems like heaven! It

is happiness only to live and breathe here!" exclaimed the girl, drawing in a deep inspiration of delight.

"Well, there you are mistaken, my lass! It ain't enough to live and breathe in any place, however pretty! Bless you, if you live and breathe you get hungry and sleepy, and can't be happy without food and bed; and you also wear out clothes and want new ones—for 'sich is life,' Em."

"Oh, father, yes," said Em. "I know that. Who should know it better than you and I! But, as you told mother, this is the Sabbath! On this day let us forget all earthly cares and worship the Lord in His temple of nature, and enjoy all the beauty and glory of His earth and Heaven! Oh, father, just now it *is* happiness enough to live and breathe!"

"Well, so it is, Em., to your young spirit, but to a man worn out with work, as I am, lass, it is something of a task even to live and breathe without sleep enough. I believe I'll go in and take a nap."

"Father, let me go and bring a blanket and a pillow, and spread them for you under these trees; it will be delicious to sleep out here in the shade."

"So it will, lass. Do it."

Em. ran to the back of the house, where all the bedding had been left to air, and brought the blankets and arranged them under the great oak tree, where presently John flung himself to enjoy the finest nap he had ever known in his life.

Em. went back to the top stair before the front door, and stood looking down upon the lovely landscape.

The wooded vale was before her, encircled by the mountains and descending to the river. After having thus "viewed the landscape o'er," she went down the steps and turned into the deeply shaded avenue by which

they had approached the house on the previous night, and she followed it in an adventurous spirit, to see where it would take her.

It took her through thick woods whose branches met over her head, whose fallen leaves, even in summer, carpeted her path; where squirrels, rabbits and hares were so tame that they sat and looked at her with their bright eyes, and scarcely took the trouble to hop out of her way, even when they were in her path; where birds were so familiar that they lighted on her hat as often as it pleased them.

And as for the girl, such was her tenderness for these wild wood creatures that she scarcely breathed as she went along for fear of frightening them.

Her woodland walk brought her at length to the great gate in the wall, beyond which she saw nothing but more woods, with an occasional glimpse of the river between.

The porter's lodge was shut up. Nobody seemed to be at home. But the great gate stood wide open, and Em. passed out of it, and looked about her. Before the wall were the thick woods, and below them the shining river, with the green hills beyond.

From the great gate three roads diverged, all deeply shaded, grass-grown, and leaf-strewn. The roads to the right and left ran along the stone wall and between it and the woods. The road on the left led, she knew, to the mountain pass; that on the right went, she knew not where; but the third road ran straight from the gate through the woods down toward the river.

Em. decided to follow the last mentioned.

She sauntered on, enjoying the glory of the summer morning, and the freshness of the woods, peopled only by the little four-footed and winged creatures, that seemed to have so little fear or so much faith as not to hurry themselves the least to get out of her way.

As she descended the wooded slope, the trees grew thicker, impeding her progress, making it necessary for her to put out her hands to push aside their branches as she passed on, and completely obstructing her view.

After walking about a quarter of a mile through this thicket, she caught glimpses between the trees, of the glistening white sands on the river's shore.

As there was less obstruction now, she quickened her steps, and in a rapid walk of ten minutes she reached the banks of the broad, bright, beautiful river!

Em. paused in a breathless rapture of admiration of the glorious scene that opened before her! The magnificent river, with its calm, majestic flow, the green hills beyond and the waving trees above them, all resplendent in the light of the morning sun.

But the very gem, the diamond, the Koh-i-noor of this radiant landscape, was an island some miles down the stream and about midway between the shores.

The perfect clearness of the air made this bright island distinctly visible to the keen vision of the young girl, and once having fixed her eyes upon it, she could not withdraw them.

It attracted, fixed, spell-bound her. Surely this must be the Enchanted Isle of the fairy tales—the "Island of Calm Delights," where the fairy princess was nurtured in blissful seclusion.

It was indeed a place of ideal beauty. Rising from the midst of the clear river, it was so freshly verdant that in the splendid morning sunshine it sparkled like an emerald! From its circle of lovely groves arose a velvety green hill, dappled over with roses and flowering shrubs, studded with arbors and garden seats, and spangled with springs and fountains that threw out rainbow lights.

Above these arose a palace, that seemed to Em. like the visionary mansion in Paradise.

It was constructed of some snow-white stone, that glistened in the sun like frosted silver and contrasted beautifully with the emerald green foliage and the bright-hued flowers around it. It had many windows, composed of single sheets of plate glass, that shone like mirrors of light, for they had no visible shutters. It had many porticoes, verandas and balconies, all constructed of the semi-transparent, silvery, frosted, white stone, in trellis-work, pillars, cornices, etc.

The palace was pure, snow-white, frosted, shining on its emerald hill, amid its emerald groves.

Em. held her breath in the very ecstasy of aspiration, as she gazed on the radiant isle that looked as if it had been let down from heaven.

Oh, to get nearer to that vision! Only to get nearer to that vision! To see, walk over, test it, to know that it was no dazzling phantasmagoria, but a resplendent, substantial reality! To see, to touch, to scent the flowers that must grow there; the roses, the lilies—oh!

You see, to this poor girl who had grown up amid the ugliness and fetor of Laundress Lane, this vision of beauty was more than exhilarating, it was intoxicating.

A homely kindly voice in her ear broke the spell that bound her.

"Was you wishing to go to de preachin', honey?"

Em. did not start, but turned around slowly and stared at the speaker in a dazed sort of way, without seeing him at all.

"Would yer be wantin' to go to de preachin', I was askin' yer, honey?" repeated the voice.

Em. started slightly then, like one waking from a dream, and saw before her the little old negro gate-porter, whom she had heard called 'Sias.

"I was askin' yer, honey, dough maybe yer didn't hear me, was yer wishin' fur to go to de preachin'?" explained the old man, touching his tall and shining stove-pipe hat.

"Oh!" exclaimed Em., "I—I just came out for a walk. I did not know there was any preaching near. Tell me, please, what lovely—"

Here Em. impulsively stopped and looked around to see if the radiant island had vanished like a brief optical illusion. No, there it beamed and sparkled. It was real. It was substantial.

"I was askin' yer, honey—" began the old man again.

"Yes, I know," said Em., interrupting him. "But please tell me first, what beautiful place is that? That island palace, splendid as the mansions of the blest?"

"That island, honey? That island is called Eden-garden," reverently replied the old man.

"Edengarden! What an appropriate name! It is a Garden of Eden, indeed! A perfect paradise! I never thought to see on the face of this earth any place so beautiful, so divine! Who lives there? Are they angels, or perfect men and women?" inquired Em., in a dream-like voice.

"De White Spirit libs dere, honey, when any one does," replied the old man, with a mysterious air.

"'The White Spirit!' Are you telling me fairy stories?" demanded Em., in perplexity.

Then she suddenly remembered her vision of the night and grew very grave.

"No, honey, I ain't telling of yer no story at all, but de blessed trufe! It's de White Spirit, dey call her," whispered old 'Sias, more mysteriously than before.

"*They* call her! *Who* call her?" questioned Em., wondering if she were dreaming or deranged.

"De people about here, honey, calls her dat name."

"But whom, WHOM do they call the White Spirit?"

"De lovely lady, honey, what 'pears on de island in de spring and disappears in de fall."

"'Appears' and 'disappears!' Do you mean that she comes and goes?"

"Yes, honey, if yer like to put it dat way, I'm agreeable; but *how* she comes and *how* she goes, nobody knows! and jes *where* she comes from and *where* she goes to, nobody knows neither!"

"But who is she, then?" persisted Em.

"Nobody knows."

"Why do they call her the White Spirit?"

"For de wery cause I been telling you! 'Cause she 'pears and disappears like a spirit, and nobody knows how! Comes and goes, nobody knows jes when or where! No one as I eber heard of has eber seen her face; it is always veiled with white gauze, and very few have seen her form; and it is always clothed in white! She flits here and there and away! Ain't all dat good cause to call her de White Spirit?" inquired the old man.

"Yes, indeed! I should think so," gravely replied the young girl, as her mind reverted to the white, spectral figure of her midnight vision. "But," she continued, "is that all you can tell me about the matter? Has that island no history? Who lived there before this mysterious White Spirit?" inquired Em.

"Nobody; she was de berry first."

"When was she first seen there? I never heard of such a thing in all my life. Can't you tell me all about it?"

"Yes, honey; but let me sit down here and rest myself. It's a long walk from the gate-lodge," said the old man, as he seated himself on a piece of rock, took off his hat, and wiped his face.

Em. followed his example and seated herself on a fragment of stone not far from her aged companion.

In doing so her eyes fell from the contemplation of the far-off island to the shining beach, and there at her feet, for the first time, she noticed a pretty little sail-boat, tied to a water-post, and rocking on the river.

"That is the 'White Dove.' It used to belong to the island, but it was given to me when my row-boat was lost on the island shores, and I had no way to get home. That was about a month ago. Now I keep it here to go to preaching in. Service begins at noon precisely, when the sun is at the highest. It is a notion of the preacher's; so we have got a good hour to spare yet, and so I'll just sit here and rest myself, while I tells yer de story ob Edengarden Isle and de beautiful White Spirit, as dey calls de lady what owns it. And I reckon, honey, when yer hears it, you'll own as yer haven't eber heard a stranger one," said the old man, settling himself comfortably.

"Do," said Em., as her thoughts flew back to the spectre she had seen descending the old manor-hall staircase in the moonlight.

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### WOMAN, OR SPIRIT?

It is the portrait of a lady.

ROGERS.

The old gate-keeper commenced his story.

"When I was a little boy, and dat was about a hun-d'ed years ago, honey—"

"My goodness *me!* You're never as old as that!" exclaimed Em., interrupting and staring at the little old man.

"More or *less*, honey, more or *less!*" hastily amended 'Sias, who was one of those colored patriarchs who take a grotesque pride in exaggerating their own age to a fabulous longevity. "When I was a little boy, a hund'ed and fifty years ago—more or *less;* for I wouldn't be guilty of a false—that there island was nothing but a wild, rocky, barren desert, what nobody ebber libbed in, and nobody ebber wanted to lib in. And so it continued to be until about fifteen years ago, when one May day, all of a suddint, comes a witch boat up de river to de rocky island!"

"A witch boat?"

"Yes, honey, a witch boat! And it comes, if you please to beliebe me, dough I know yer can't, for all it's de trufe I'm tellin' on yer—it comes, honey, dis boat does, straight up de riber agin de stream, widdout de help ob a stitch ob sail, or a stick ob oar! And it comes a gruntin', and a groanin', and a puffin', and a blowin', and breathin' hard like any other hard-worked livin' creetur—it's trufe I'm tellin' yer, honey, dough I know yer'll nebber beliebe it! Yer can't, yer know, 'less yer'd seed it!"

"Yes, I can," laughed Em.; "and I *have* seen it, or many like it. It was a steamboat that came to the island. Did you never hear of a steamboat?"

"'*Steam*'—'*boat?*' What trash dat, yer tryin' to 'pose on an ole man? Steamboat! I's heard o' steam, and heard o' boat, and likewise seen bofe on 'em, offen and offen! But 'steamboat!' no, ma'am! Yer might's well ax me to beliebe in a *fire*-carriage as a *steam*-boat!"

"Well, I will ask you to believe in a fire-carriage, f r

it is true! There are fire-carriages that carry from ten to fifty great cars behind them!" laughed Em.

"G'long 'way from here, gal! Ef yer 'sumes for to tell me sich awful ones, I won't stop here to listen to 'em! I'll get up and go right away and never tell yer another word about Edengarden and de White Spirit," exclaimed the old man, rising in righteous indignation and setting his tall hat upon his head.

But Em. was by his side in an instant—imploring him:

"Oh, *please*, Uncle 'Sias! I'll be good! I won't say another word you don't like! And, remember, I believed every word you told," she concluded, as she took his hat away and gently forced him to resume his seat and continue his story.

"Well, honey, dis boat, 'dout any sails or oars, comes puffin' and blowin' and gruntin' and groanin' and tuggin' and tuggin' behind it—what do you think now, honey? why, a long raft loaded with a lot o' truck—barrels, and casks, and kegs; also tools and 'tensils and 'chinery and laws knows what—'nough to cut down a forest and build a town, a body would think, and men enough besides to do all de work!"

"Well, what then?" asked Em.

"De witchcraft boat comes to a stop and stands still, and puffs and blows for a while a hund'ed times harder'n ever, jes for all de worl' like any oder ole body what has run too fas' and got out o' breaf! It panted so hard, it did, dey heard it way up to de Wilderness House itself! When de boat 'covered of its breaf, de men 'gan to get de load out'n de raft onto de shore o' de island. Well, honey, yer might take yer Bible oaf to it, dat I got my little fishin' boat and rowed up dat a way to see what was going on. I kep' on *dis* side ob de island. De witch boat was on t'other side, 'haps

fast asleep arter her hard work; anyhow she wasn't making no fuss! Well, chile, when I got dere, I hadn't no call to leabe de boat, 'cause dere wasn't no trees dere to struct de view, nuffin but bare ground and rocks. So dere I see on de hill, on de middle ob de island, a lot o' men with chains and spikes a draggin' and a measurin', and another man a watchin' them, and den callin' out de figures, and yet another man standin' up wid a white paper book and pencil, a writin' down de figures. So I didn't see no more, and so I come away, habin' to go to my work. Next day I was too busy to leabe de work; but de day arter, I made a scuse to go a fishin', and I rowed up to de island, and rowed on de safe side, keeping' away from de witch boat—leastways I *thought* how I was on de safe side, seein' I was away from de boat, but, laws, honey, listen—"

"I am listening!"

"Well, while I 'tendin' to fish, watchin' de island, I see some men standin' way off to de distance, like dey was waitin' for somethin'. Well, honey, dere was a little thread o' curly smoke comin' out'n a creak in de rocks, like somebody had trowed a match away or somethin'. I didn't mind it a bit, till all of a suddint somethin' went off like hund'ed tousand claps o' thunder all in one—

"'BANG! BANG!! BANG!!! SPANG!!!!' And up flew rocks as big as houses, and down they come all around me and my boat, in a hall-storm of millstones —dropping in de ribber.

"'CO-SHOWSH! CO-SHOWSH! CO-SHOWSH!' and flingin' up water-spouts and whirlpools all about!

"Lor! Lor! Lor! honey! Ef ebber yer see a poor, mis'able, ole colored gem'an clean demented and out'n his lunacies, long o' scare, dis is de man. I couldn't manage my boat no more'n nuffin 'tall, a flyin'

round and round in de whirlpool among de water-spouts and millstones thunderin' down all around. I jest went leapin' mad, and 'spected instant death."

"They were blasting rocks previous to laying the foundation of the palace, I suppose; but it was very dangerous," said Em.

"Hush, honey, I tell yer! By and by, when the horrid noise was over, and the millstones stopped falling, and the boat stopped flyin' round, and I found out as I wasn't killed, I jest laid myself to my oars and went up stream faster'n I ebber moved before or since. And, honey, I never went anigh that island again for years. Lor! it makes my flesh creep to think of it now!"

"You had a narrow escape of your life, that time," said Em., trying to keep from laughing, for seeing the hero of the story quite safe before her, she had no check upon her sense of the ludicrous in the man's adventure.

"Well, honey, to make a long story short, dese blastings, as yer call dem—dese thunderings, and lightnings, and earthquakes, and hailstorms of millstones, and water-spouts, and whirlpools, and commotions, and panics, and terrors, continued all de live-long summer and fall, and far into de winter. De men dey built sheds and huts for demselves and deir tools, and squatted dere all winter. And de witchboat went and come backwards and forwards all de winter, till de ribber friz, and ice locked her on the lower shore of dis island.

"Next spring work was 'sumed, and we all 'gan to see de white palace rising from its foundations, and de walks bein' laid, and de young trees and bushes planted.

"And den, honey, it 'gan to be rumored for the first time, how a lady, young and beautiful, and 'NORMOUS RICH, had bought de rocky island, 'count ob its remote sitteration and subliberty, and was a-going to turn it into a perfect paradise."

"And she has done it!" exclaimed Em., with enthusiasm. "She has made 'the wilderness to bloom and blossom as the rose.'"

"It took years, honey, to bring it to what it is now. All that men and money could do for it was done in about two years; but it took time for the beautiful trees to grow. And I tell you, honey, dat every year dat island has grown more and more beautiful. And every year it will keep on growing more and still more beautiful, until—until the end of the world!" concluded 'Sias, driven to extremity for comparison.

Em. smiled, a little sobered down by the knowledge that this lovely, "enchanted island" was, after all, only the slow creation of time, money, and human hands.

"And perhaps the White Spirit of Edengarden is no more than a woman like other women," she said to herself. Then aloud to old 'Sias:

"Yet it is very strange that so little is seen or known of the fortunate owner of this delightful home. But at least her name must be known."

"Well, yes, some people what go to de county courthouse, where de deeds and dockerments is kep' and taxes paid and sich, do say her name is Lyn, and how she is a widow; but in course I don't know the rights ob dat. She's been libin' here off and on for de las' fourteen years, comin' ebery spring and goin' away ebery fall; but she libs all to herself, making no visits and 'ceiving none. When she first comed here fourteen years ago, in course de county quality, as in duty bound to welcome de stranger in deir neighborhood, did call upon de lady; but laws! dey never got no farder dan her front hall, which dey do say is all white marble, and dey never seed nobody but her servants, who treated them with delicious refreshments, but said dat deir mist'ess could not 'ceive visits nor likewise pay dem. *Umph,*

*humph!* Weren't our quality mad, neider? Den by and by, chile, it 'gan to be whispered how dis lovely lady had 'tired from deciety, 'pon account ob some great sorrow or shame she had suffered, like habing her husband hung for murder, or sich!"

"Oh!" cried the girl, with a start and a shudder.

"And some went so far as to hint dat her name wasn't Lyn at all, and dat she had run away and hid herself 'pon 'count ob some great crime as *she* had 'mitted."

"Ah!" exclaimed Em., in a tone of pain, as if she had received a stab.

"But dat last yer can't get anybody about here to beliebe, 'cause she's too well knowed for de best-hearted angel as eber breafed, if dere ain't nuffin else knowed about her. She's a ministering angel, she is, to all de poor, de sick, de sufferin', and 'special to childun!"

"But if she never *does* show herself, how can she minister to the poor?"

"Oh, lor, honey, she's got lots and lots ob serbants to fly and do her bidding in all directions! And special one likely colored 'oman as carries her purse and is her confidentional maid."

"Her confidential maid, do you say?"

"Yes, honey, dat's what I meant to say, her confidentional maid, what carries her purse and 'spenses her alms."

"Is the lady at the island now?" inquired Em., in a tone of reverence.

"No one has seed her, or any ob her usual 'tendants yet, honey, so I can't tell you; but, lor! she may have rived last night or dis morning eben. Howsoeber, we'll be likely to know when we go to de preaching."

"Where *is* the preaching?" inquired Em., with some interest.

The old man looked at her in surprise for some moments without speaking, and then said:

"Why, I thought I had told you! On de island, of course!"

"On Edengarden!" exclaimed Em., in delight.

"Yes, certainly! where else should it be? Will you go?" inquired old 'Sias.

"Oh, yes, yes, yes! Indeed I will! Who preaches there?"

"Why, I thought I had told you—"

"No, you didn't really."

"Well, dere! how one forgets! Well, den, honey, it's dis way. 'Mong de people as de lady has around her is one who libs all to himself in a little white temple at dis end ob de island. He is an old-fashioned saint or hermit, who nebber leabs de place, winter nor summer, but stays dere and 'spenses charity all de year 'round and preaches at twelve o'clock ebery Sunday for all as will come to hear him. But he nebber leabs de island, not for no purpose."

"Why does he never leave the island? Has he taken vows never to do so?"

"Oh, no, nothing like dat! But he can't get away, honey; he's blind and lame."

"Oh, poor, poor man! blind and lame! What misfortunes!"

"Indeed, you wouldn't say so if you was to see him, honey, or to hear him! He's just de grandest looking man you ebber clapped your eyes on! Like a king, honey! Like a prophet! Like Moses! Like Isaiah! Like David, honey! And you neber would know he couldn't walk, for he stands like a pillar of strength! And you neber would beliebe he was blind; for his great, shining blue eyes look through and through you, and above you and ober de ribber, and far-r-r away up

into de blue heaben! And den, 'fore yer could catch yer breaf, back again, looking down into yer very heart. Dere, honey, dat's him!"

"Was he always blind?" inquired Em.

"Oh, dear, no, honey! I'll tell you how dey say it happened. He was a young minister, and was just married, and had just walked out'n de church wid his young bride on his arm, as happy as a king, when de thunder-storm, as had been gedderin' all de arternoon, suddenly burst. Den dere came an awful flash o' lightning, and clap o' thunder, and smote de two down in de same instant! De poor bride was killed on de spot, but dey found out arterwards as he was only struck blind."

"'*Only struck* blind!'" echoed Em., in tones of deep compassion.

"Yes, but oh! honey, it do seem like dat flash o' lightning what shet up his vision on dis earth opened it into heaben. And de paralytic stroke what lately chained his limbs loosed his spirit, for he do seem to go to de land o' glory, honey, and bring some ob de light down to some ob us poor, benighted mortals. But come, chile, dere's my boy 'Si. got my boat ready. Come, get in, and we'll sail away to de island."

THE END.

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*A Sequel to "Em." is published under the title of*
"Em.'s Husband, *A Sequel to 'Em.,'*" *by*
*Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth.*

*Handsomely bound in cloth. Price $1.00. Paper cover, 50 cts.*

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